WHISTLE!™

SHONEN JUMP MANGA

Story & Art by

Daisuke Higuchi

volume 16

THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR MANGA

SHONEN JUMP

WHISTLE! volume 16

FEEL THE DESTINY

Everybody has a dream, and for Shô Kazamatsuri, that dream is simple: he wants to be the best soccer player he can possibly be. He's the spirited leader of the Sakura Josui Junior High team and everyone looks up to him. In turn, he tries to keep the team together at any cost!

Shô barely manages to make it onto the special select team as a backup alternate player. When the team plays against Rakuyô Junior High in their very first game, they learn the hard way that skill alone isn't enough—they need to abandon their egos and come together as a unified group. But will any player be able to emerge as a leader and bring the team together?

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This book reads from right to left.

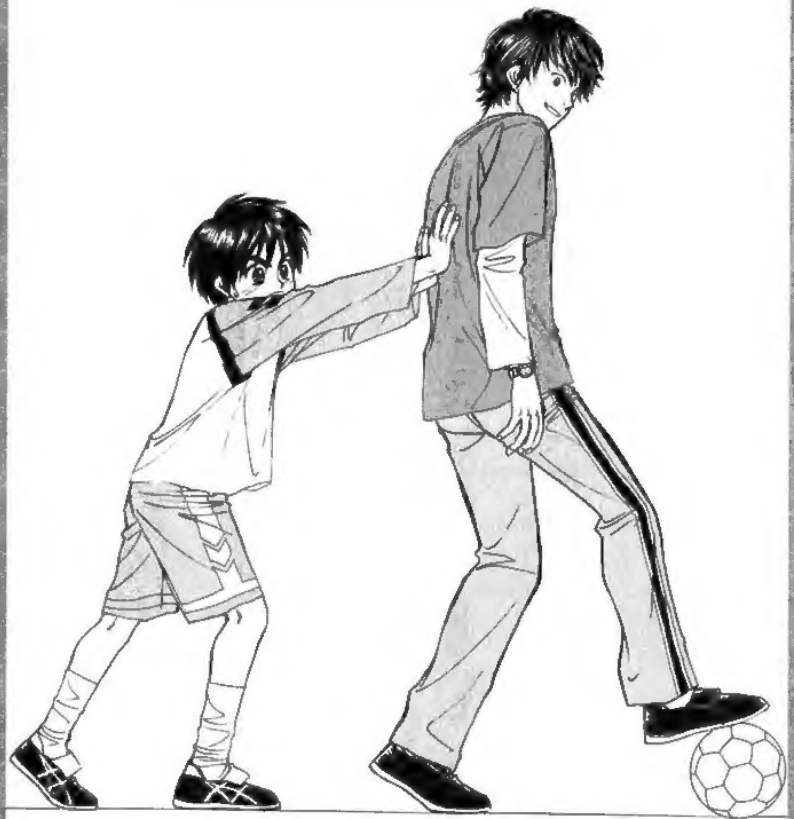
viz media

RATED A FOR ALL AGES

WHISTLE!

Vol. 16

FEEL THE DESTINY



Story and Art by

Daisuke Higuchi

MASAHIRO SUŌ

J2
PANTERA FUCHŪ

FORWARD

TAKASHI NARUMI

MEISEI
JUNIOR HIGH

FORWARD

TAKI SUGIHARA

TAKANAWA
JUNIOR HIGH

MIDFIELDER

STORY

TO REALIZE HIS DREAM, SHŌ KAZAMATSURI, A BENCHWARMER AT SOCCER POWERHOUSE MUSASHI-NOMORI, TRANSFERRED TO JOSUI JUNIOR HIGH SO HE COULD PLAY THE GAME HE LOVES.

JOSUI'S SOCCER TEAM WAS A JOKE UNTIL SOUJŪ MATSUSHITA, A FORMER JAPAN LEAGUE PLAYER, TOOK ON THE COACHING DUTIES. UNDER MATSUSHITA'S GUIDANCE, THE TEAM HAS BECOME A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. THEY BLASTED THROUGH THE DISTRICT PRIMARY TOURNAMENT, AND NOW THEY ARE DETERMINED TO ADVANCE THROUGH THE MAIN TOURNAMENT.

MEANWHILE, SHŌ, TATSUYA AND DAICHI WERE INVITED TO THE SELECTION CAMP FOR THE TOKYO SELECT TEAM. ON THE LAST DAY OF CAMP, A RED VS. WHITE MATCH DETERMINED THE FINAL TEAM ROSTER. SHŌ MANAGED TO SCORE DURING THE MATCH, AND WAS CHOSEN FOR THE TEAM...AS A SUBSTITUTE. EVEN THOUGH HE'S MADE THE CUT, HE'S BEGINNING TO QUESTION HIS ROLE ON THE TEAM...

CHARACTERS

SHŌ KAZAMATSURI

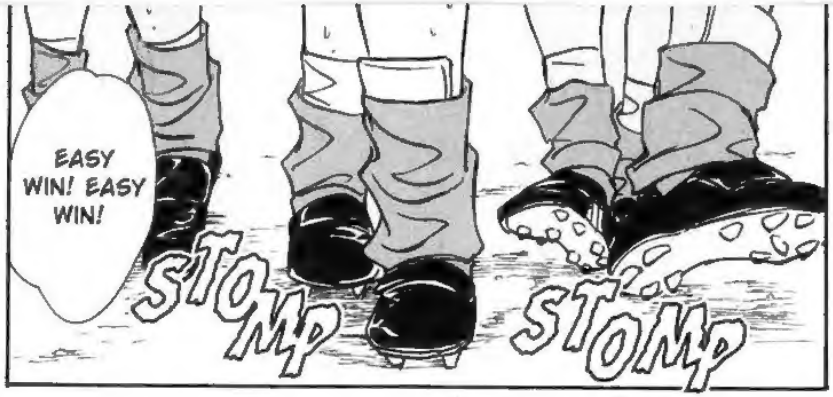
● JOSUI JUNIOR HIGH SOCCER TEAM
FORWARD

AKIRA SAIONJI

TSUBASA SHIINA

TATSUYA MIZUNO

● JOSUI JUNIOR HIGH SOCCER TEAM
MIDFIELDER



STAGE.135 Running in Place

I'LL BET WE'RE AS STRONG AS THE NATIONAL SELECT TEAM.
THREE STRAIGHT WINS AGAINST HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS!
Tokyo Select 2
vs.
Mitakadai High School 1
SURE, BUT I THINK THEIR DEFENSE WON THE GAME.
WITHOUT SCORING GOALS, YOU CAN'T WIN.
IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY... THE KIDS ARE GETTING BETTER EVERY YEAR.
MAN!
THE JUNIOR HIGH KIDS ARE GETTING SCARY!

WHISTLE!

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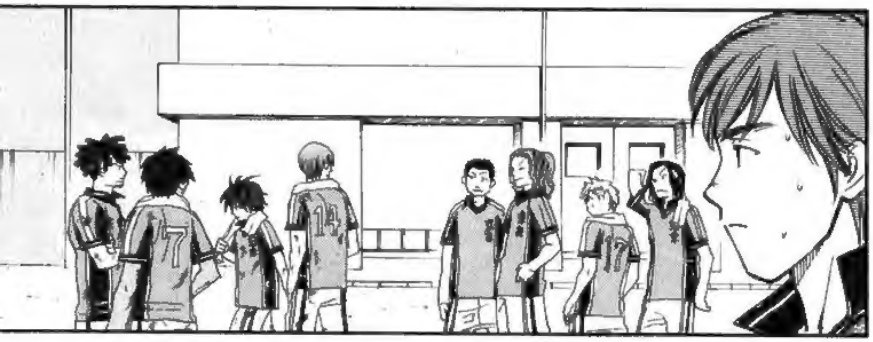
YOU GUYS ROCK!
JUST KNOWING THAT I HAVE THAT ONE GOAL ADVANTAGE ...
YEAH, YOU'RE AWESOME, TAKASHI.
WE WERE LUCKY, HOLDING THEM TO JUST ONE GOAL...



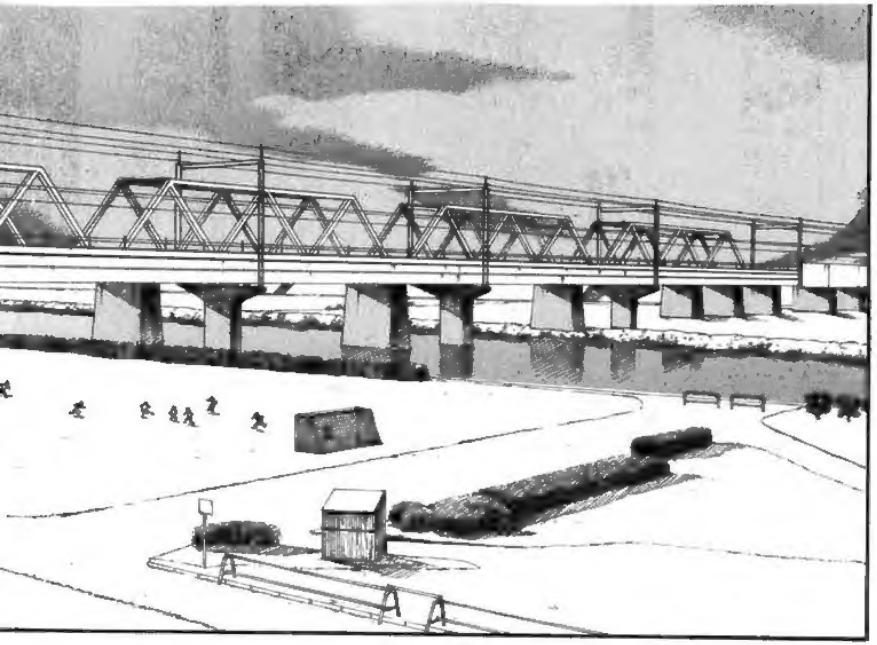
JUST WONDERING WHAT THE COACH HAS IN MIND.
NOTHING...
YEAH.
WHAT'S WRONG, CAP?

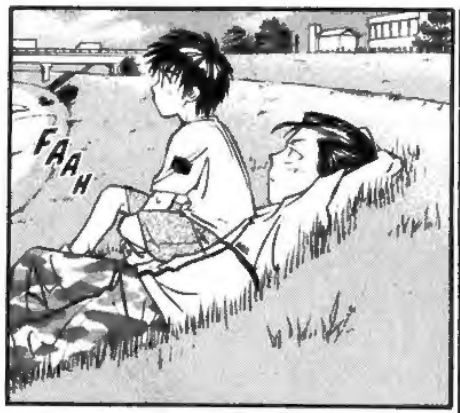
WHAT THE ...?
FWISSS

ROKU-SUKE, SPRAY.
OH... WELL.
HERE.
YEAH, THEY MAKE YOU WORK, ALL RIGHT.
LIKE WE THOUGHT, PLAYING THESE HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS IS A BEAR.

YEAH, WE WON, BUT YOU GUYS ON DEFENSE WERE LOOKING BLEAK.
東京
東京

YOU'VE GOT IT BACK-WARDS, SUPER-STAR.
I'LL BET YOU WANNA THANK ME FOR GETTING THAT GOAL BACK.
I GOT NERVOUS WHEN THEY TIED IT UP.




FAAH

I MAY QUIT.
JOLT

IT FEELS LIKE WE'VE HAD THE RUG PULLED OUT FROM UNDER US.
I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO FINDING OUT HOW SHE'D COACH US.
BUT SHE HASN'T SAID JACK SO FAR.

SHŌ.
THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUSTING AND BEING OVER-PROTECTIVE.

CAN WE TALK A MINUTE?

IT'S UN-BEARABLE.
HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE THEM?
AND HOW LONG SHOULD I TRY?
IS IT EVER GONNA WORK OUT, SOMEDAY?

K... KIDDING?
JUST KIDDING!
TE... TEPPEI?
I COULDN'T LIVE WITH IT!
I CAN'T...
...BUT...
QUITTING IS THE SAME AS RUNNING AWAY WITH MY TAIL BETWEEN MY LEGS!
...
I KNOW WE HAVE TO DO OUR BEST, BUT...
RIGHT NOW, WE JUST HAVE TO TRY OUR BEST ...

WHO?
MY CLASS-MATE FROM THE 7TH GRADE.
HE LOOKS LIKE MITSUHIRO!
YOU WAIT!
I'M NOT BRAGGING, BUT NO ONE COULD BEAT ME IN A RUNNING RACE.
UNTIL HE DID.
WELL, SPEED IS ALL HE'S GOT.
FIVE MINUTES IS IM-POSSIBLE, RIGHT?
WANNA BET?
WHY NOT.
YOU BETTER BE BACK IN FIVE MINUTES, OKAY?
GO BUY SOME DRINKS.
OKEY DOKEY.
ALRIGHTY.
EDOGAWA FIRS JUNIOR HIGH

I FEEL THE SAME WAY.
THAT'S WHY...I'M TROUBLED. IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF.
IF IT UPSETS YOU, COME TAKE IT FROM ME!
JERK!
ALL I HAVE IS MY STUBBORNESS. I WON'T GIVE UP ON MYSELF.
AH!
THAT BRAT LOOKS FAMILIAR TO ME.
FWIP
DASH

ZOINK
SOMEONE PASSED ME?!
GRIN
WHO IS HE?
SNAP
I LOST THE BET BECAUSE OF YOU!
OUCH.
SLUG
SEE? I TOLD YOU I'M FASTER.
AND I LOST.
AAGH!
WE RACED.
SLUMP
I FOUND OUT WHO HE WAS RIGHT AWAY. HE WAS A TRANSFER STUDENT IN THE SAME GRADE.
OH!
AH!
BOINK
THAT WON'T BE POSSIBLE.
WE'LL SETTLE THIS IN TRACK PRACTICE!

RIGHT THEN, DOING THAT, I WAS BETTER THAN ANYONE. I WAS THE BEST...
BUT AT LEAST I HAD CONFIDENCE IN MY SPEED.
I COULD DO NOTHING ELSE WELL.
I'M NUMBER ONE!!
WHOOO
SH

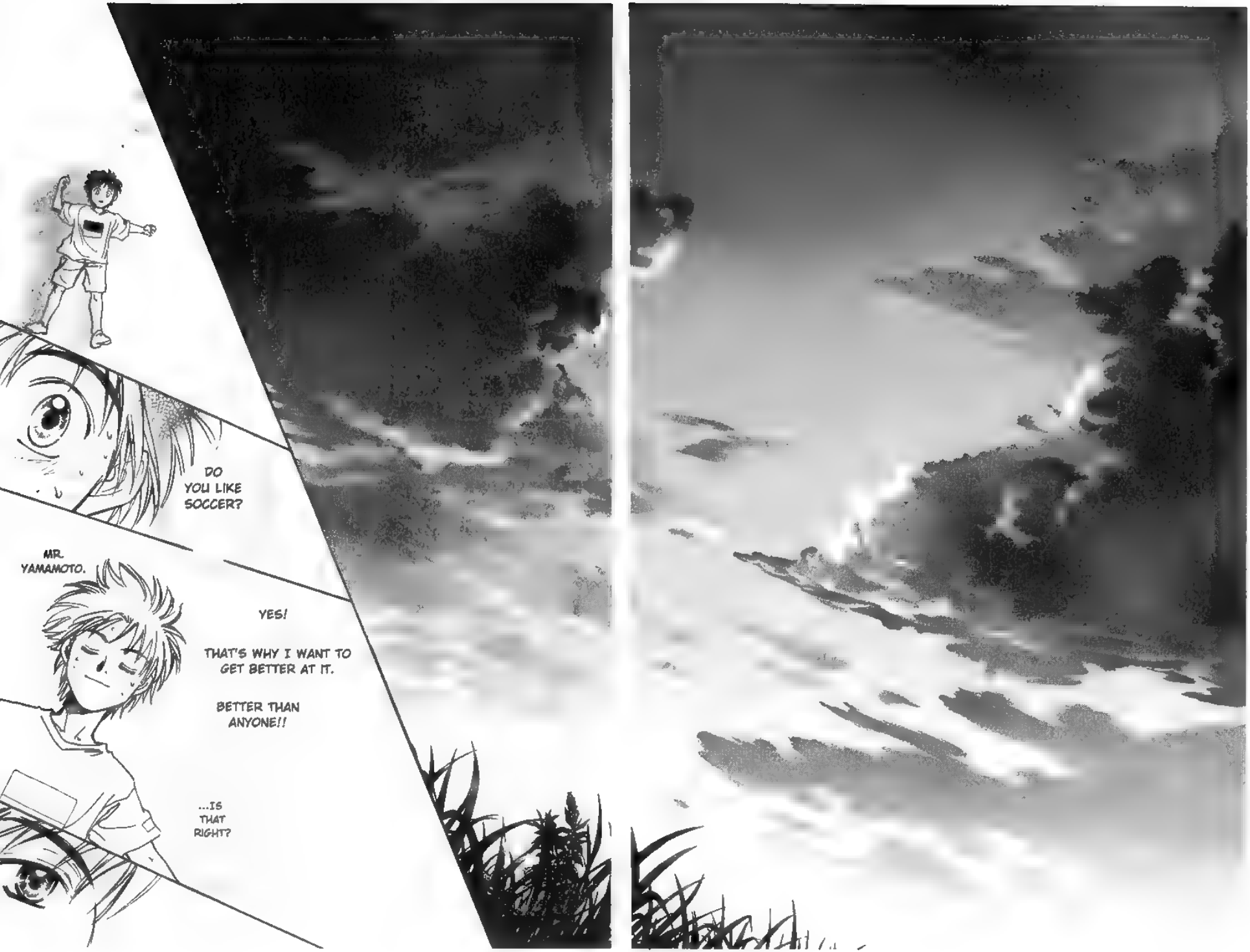
JERK
OKAY, ENOUGH OF THIS GARBAGE!
...SOMEHOW...
...SOCCER BECAME THE DEFINING THING IN MY LIFE.
WAHAHAHA
TRY TAKING IT FROM ME!
LET ME USE YOUR BALL.
I'M NOT A WEIRDO!
WHOA! HERE COMES A WEIRDO!
SWISSSSH
UOOOHHH!
GOAL!
TEPPEI?

...I'M WITH THE SOCCER CLUB.
BECAUSE ...
SO I THOUGHT I'D BEAT HIM AT HIS FAVORITE SPORT... SOCCER.
I TRIED TO RECRUIT HIM TO THE TRACK TEAM, BUT HE WOULDN'T JOIN.
HIS FATHER GOT RELOCATED.
BEFORE I WAS GOOD ENOUGH, THAT JERK SLIPPED AWAY.
GOOD LUCK, LITTLE IRON FOOT.
SEE YA.
BUT ...
SO YOU JOINED THE SOCCER TEAM?
THAT'S RIGHT.
HOWEVER, YOU KNOW ...
BECAUSE OF SOME JERK...
THE FACT YOU PLAYED EVEN AFTER HE LEFT MEANS ...

WE'VE GOTTA EXERCISE, AFTER ALL.
I'M TIRED, BUT IT FEELS GOOD.
TWO-ON-EIGHT WAS A BIT RECKLESS, I GUESS.
IT'S BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T BEEN PLAYING GAMES.
I FORGOT HOW MUCH FUN IT WAS TO KICK THE BALL AROUND.

UM, I'M STILL IN JUNIOR HIGH.
THAT WAS A DIRTY TRICK FOR A GROWNUP!
WHO'S MITSUHIRO? I'M KATSUHIKO.
HOW 'BOUT THAT? DO YOU GIVE UP NOW, MITSUHIRO ?!
TOSSLE TOSSLE

WHO PUT YOU IN CHARGE?
ALL RIGHT! COME ON!
I'M PLAYING, TOO!
AHHH. ANOTHER ONE!
SWISSH


DO YOU LIKE SOCCER?
MR. YAMAMOTO.
YES!
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO GET BETTER AT IT.
BETTER THAN ANYONE!!
...IS THAT RIGHT?

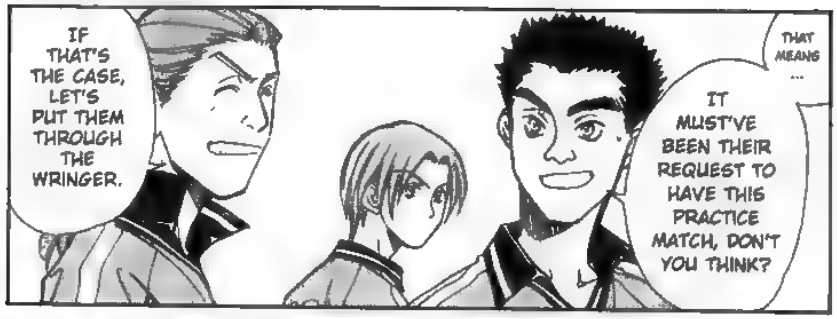
CHATTER
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT 'EM, THEY'RE JUST JUNIOR HIGH KIDS.
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING.
WHO ARE THEY?
CHATTER
CHATTER
THEY'RE GOING TO PUT US UP AGAINST AN ORDINARY JUNIOR HIGH TEAM? AFTER ALL THIS?
WHAT'S COACH THINKING?
CHATTER
CHATTER
WHY RAKUYŌ?

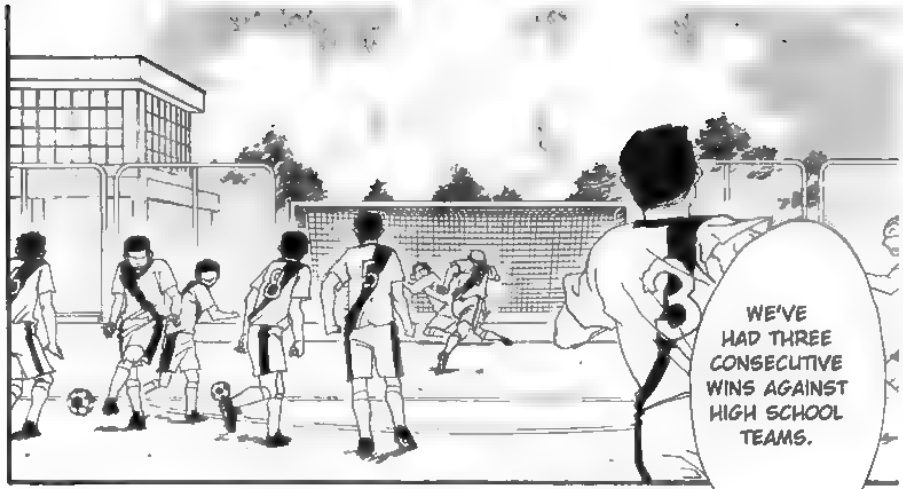
THAT'S ALL.
I LIKE THE GAME. THAT'S WHY I DO IT!
YUP!
?
FOR WHAT?
THANKS, TEPPEI.
WELL, WE'VE WON THREE STRAIGHT VICTORIES AGAINST HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS.
WHO DO WE PLAY IN OUR NEXT PRACTICE GAME?
September
HEY, IS THAT THE TEAM?
IT'S PROBABLY AGAINST AN EVEN BETTER TEAM.

STAGE.136 Dissonant Hearts

WHISTLE!™

READ THIS WAY

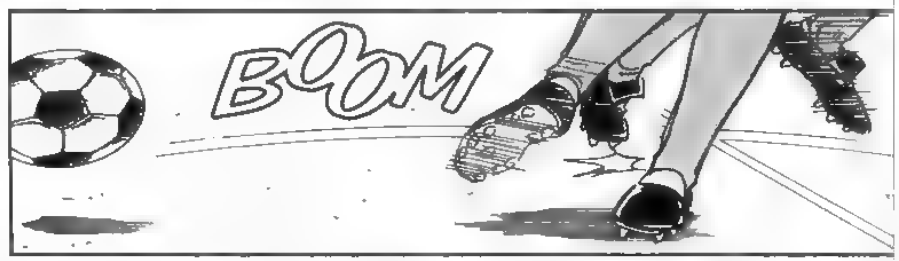

IF THAT'S THE CASE, LET'S PUT THEM THROUGH THE WRINGER.
THAT MEANS ...
IT MUST'VE BEEN THEIR REQUEST TO HAVE THIS PRACTICE MATCH, DON'T YOU THINK?



SH OOM
MARKED BY THREE PLAYERS!

SOME-ONE! COVER!!
OH NO...
FUMP

TWEEE
IT FEELS LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY HERE. THAT MAKES ME NERVOUS.
EITHER WAY...
OR ...?


BOOM

DA SH

SHOOK
WHOA!
AND LOOK AT THE TIGHT DEFENSE IN FRONT OF THE GOAL...
THEY GET BACK FAST!!

SWIPE
THOOM
!

SMAP
SMAP
THEY'RE ALL DOING THEIR OWN THING. THAT'S WHY THEY CAN'T COORDINATE THEIR ATTACK.
USE YOUR VOICES !!
I'M SENDING THE PASS WITH THE GOAL IN MIND. YOU COULDN'T REACT IN TIME!
GRR
WHA ...
WHERE ARE YOU PASSING IT? SEND IT TO MY FOOT.

GRIN
IT'LL BE PRETTY HARD TO SCORE.
GLANCE
SMILE

TOOOM
I'LL DO IT!
DA
SH
OH NO! THE DEFENSE!
TUMP
ALL OF THEM ARE GOOD PLAYERS! BUT THEY'RE SCATTERED EVERY-WHERE.
CALL OUT TO EACH OTHER!
CAN'T HAVE BOTH HOLDING MIDFIELDERS DOWNFIELD ...
adidas

DASH
RRRRRR

BREAK THEM DOWN WITH A CROSS!
TAKE THEM FROM THE SIDES!
YOU CAN'T BREAK THROUGH HEAD ON!

AHHH, WHAT ARE THEY DOING?!

DASH
SKK
FOOM
KRP
JUST AS I THOUGHT.
THEY'RE TARGETING OUR TEAM-WORK!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE COVERING!

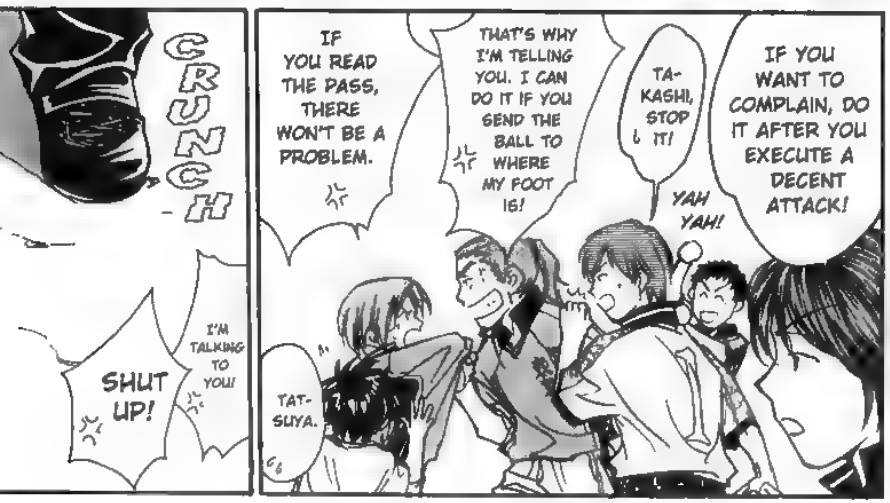
FOOOM
BUT BECAUSE RAKUYŌ DOESN'T LAUNCH THEIR ATTACK RECKLESSLY, THEY DON'T GIVE US OPPORTUNITIES
UNTIL NOW, OPPONENTS ALWAYS ATTACKED, WHICH CREATED CHANCES.
WHA?
IDIOT! THE LINE IS OVERLAPPING. I CAN'T SEE...
!
I GOT IT!
BOOM
AH.

READ THIS WAY
SETTLE DOWN, PRINCESS.
NOBODY IS SENDING ME CROSSES!
THAT TIGHT DEFENSE IN FRONT OF THE GOAL!
PUNT
THIS IS BULL!
SWISH
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
SO, IT WAS OUR FAULT?!
WHY WERE BOTH OF THEM ATTACKING THE GOAL?
WHAT ABOUT THE MIDFIELDERS?! THEY GOT IN OUR WAY! AND THEY LET EVERYTHING THROUGH!
WHAT? ARE YOU SAYING IT WAS OUR FAULT?!
YOU ENDED UP GIVING THEM THE FIRST GOAL!
YOUR DEFENSE WAS A SHAMBLES!

...OUR WEAK SPOT.
RAKUYŌ DEFINITELY KNOWS...
FWISH
GOAL!
THAT'S THE HALF!

SCOLD
WHAT'S THE POINT IN PLAYING WHEN WE HAVE NO GOALS! IT MAKES US LOSE INTEREST IN DEFENDING.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND? NO MATTER HOW WE DEFEND, UNLESS WE SCORE POINTS, WE CAN'T WIN!
NO MATTER HOW DESPERATELY WE DEFEND, YOU KEEP DAWDLING WITH THE BALL, AND LOSE IT TO OPPONENTS.
SCOLD
IF EACH OF US PLAYS JUST THE WAY HE WANTS, NONE OF US WILL BREAK THROUGH THAT DEFENSE.
USE YOUR BRAINS AT LEAST A LITTLE!
SCOLD
SCOLD

BUT DEFENSE GETS THIS "GRR" "GRR" JUNK JUST FOR FAILING ONCE. IT ISN'T FAIR.
OFFENSE GETS NO COMPLAINTS EVEN IF AN ATTACK OR TWO FAILS.


CRUNCH
SHUT UP!
I'M TALKING TO YOU!
IF YOU READ THE PASS, THERE WON'T BE A PROBLEM.
TATSUYA.
THAT'S WHY I'M TELLING YOU. I CAN DO IT IF YOU SEND THE BALL TO WHERE MY FOOT IS!
TAKASHI, STOP IT!
YAH YAH!
IF YOU WANT TO COMPLAIN, DO IT AFTER YOU EXECUTE A DECENT ATTACK!

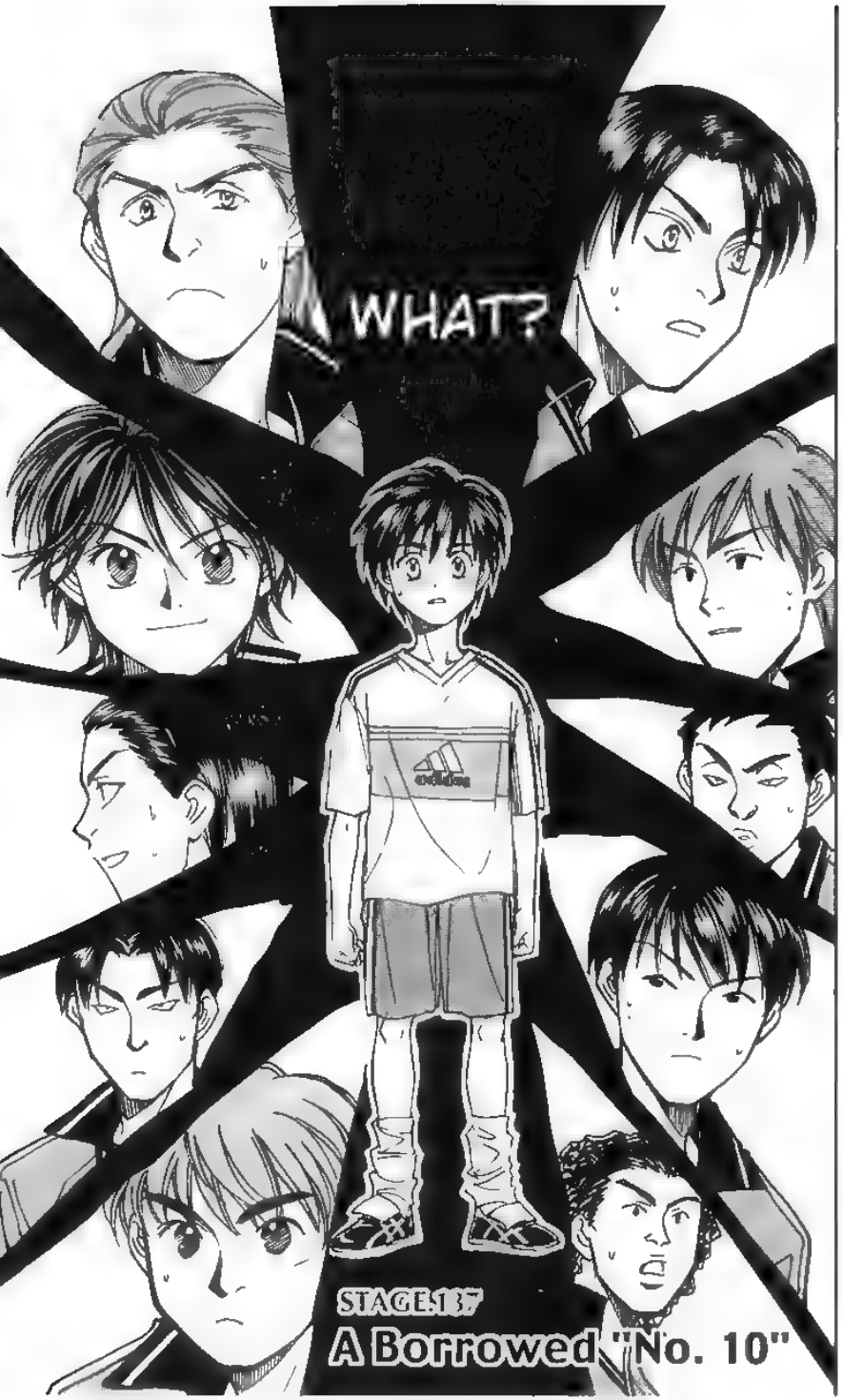
YOU SUCK. COMPLAIN AFTER YOU GET A GOAL.
FOOL.
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR TRASH FROM SOMEONE WHO PLAYS A SIMPLE POSITION LIKE FORWARD!
MORON.
WE DEFEND AND ATTACK.

THAT'S ENOUGH, TAKASHI.
YOU LITTLE PUNK!

YOU'RE ALL IDIOTS!
WHAT ?!
WHAT ABOUT YOU?! SENDING THE PASS INTO OPEN SPACE.
ARE YOU PRETENDING TO BE AN ARTIST OR WHAT?

WHAT ?!
ME?
adidas

SPLASH
THAT'S ENOUGH.
HE SHREWDLY ESCAPED.
IS EVERYONE FINISHED?
WE'LL CHANGE THE LINEUP IN THE SECOND HALF.
TATSUYA WILL BE REPLACED BY...
SHŌ!



STAGE.137

A Borrowed "No. 10"

WHISTLE!

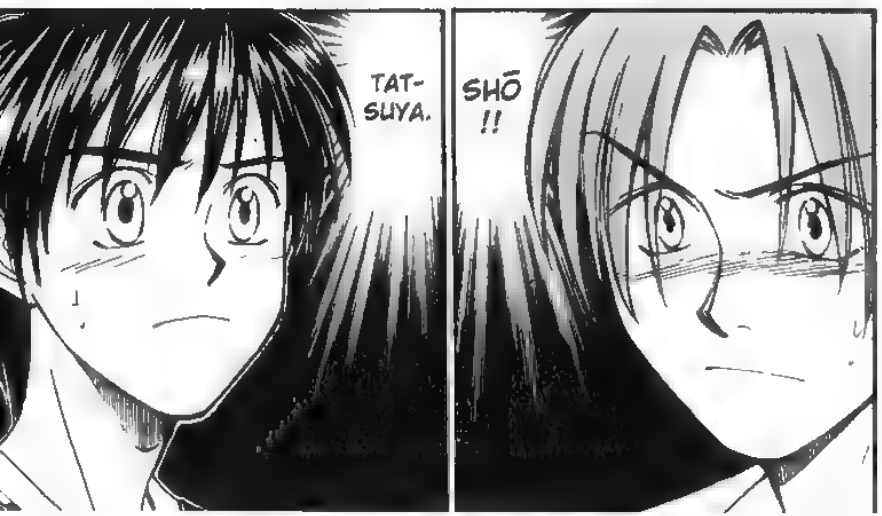
STAGE.137

A Borrowed "No. 10"

COA
...
COME TO THINK OF IT...
SHŌ DOESN'T HAVE A UNIFORM.

TAT-SUYA.
WILL YOU LEND YOUR UNIFORM TO SHŌ?
COACH ?!

MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
SERIOUSLY?
MUTTER
MURMUR
BUT... HE'S JUST A SUB-STITUTE.
MURMUR


TAT-
SUYA.
SHŌ
!!

...

YES
...
AH
...

FWIP

I DON'T THINK IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT.
SHE'S A BULLY.
I FEEL BAD FOR HIM.
JOLT
PUSH

DON'T DAWDLE! BRACE YOURSELVES FOR THE GAME!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THE SECOND HALF IS ABOUT TO START!
YES!

JOSUI'S LITTLE GUY.
I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS WITH THE SELECT TEAM...

UNLESS I USE THIS OPPORTUNITY ...
I WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE FORWARD!

SMACK

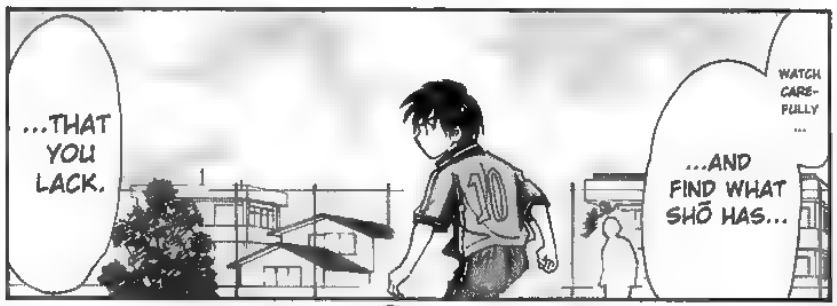
...THE WAY YOU WANT.
PLAY ...
PUSH

DASH

JOG

GLANCE
GLANCE
BUT FOR NOW...
WHAT IS THE COACH THINKING?
I DON'T GET IT.
LOOKING AROUND... HE'S PANICKING.
GLANCE
GLANCE
...IT'S PROBABLY SAFE TO SEND IT TO EISHI.
TOM

TAT-SUYA.
DON'T LOOK AWAY. WATCH.


...THAT YOU LACK.
WATCH CARE-FULLY ...
...AND FIND WHAT SHŌ HAS...

WHAT I LACK?

I'LL SEND BACK FOR NOW.
BOOM
VOO
SH

I WAS MARKING HIM, BUT I LOST A SIGHT OF HIM FOR A MOMENT.
THAT WAS CLOSE.

...
WHAT IS THAT?
WHAT SHŌ HAS... BUT I DON'T.

VOOO

HE'S ALWAYS IN THE OPEN SPACE.
WHEN-EVER I NOTICE HIM, HE'S FREE.
THAT GUY.

DASH
DASH
DASH

WOOSH

BOOM
SMASH

FOOSH

I SEE IT!
TA-KASHI IS FREE!
SHŌ ?!

STAGE.138- This is No. 10

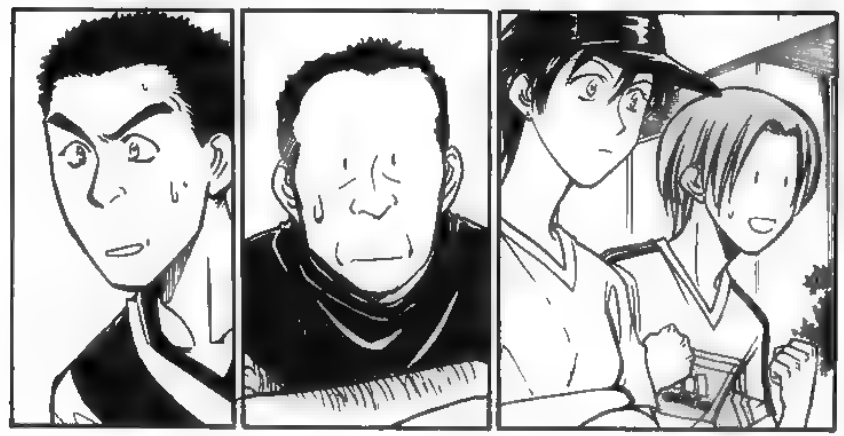
WHISTLE!

COME ON, MIDGET!
GO FOR IT!
BOO
OW

I GOT IT!
SHŌ WAS THERE TO COVER?!
HE HAS US!
TAKASHI IS FREE!!
OH NO!
HE READ WHERE THE BALL WOULD FALL?!
THAT KID!

BLUSH
....
ACK.
THAT'S...GOTTA HURT.
I'M SORRY. ARE YOU OKAY?
AHHH
Y... YOU!
I'M SORRY... COULDN'T HELP... I KNOW IT'S NOTHING TO LAUGH ABOUT
COACH?
PFFT

GAH
KO
OM



...AND GET IT FOR YOU.
SHEESH
I'LL COME...
CAN'T BE HELPED.
HE SURE IS.
HOW TROUBLESOME
PFFT
...

HE'S TRULY AN INTERESTING GUY.

...HOW CAN THE BALL FLY UP?! YOU SUCK!
I'M SORRY.
GRAB
WHEN YOU KICK WITH THE INSIDE OF YOUR FOOT...

...SO I TRIED TO KICK WITH GREAT CARE... BUT I ENDED UP DOING IT TOO HARD.
I'M SO SORRY.
I WANTED TO SEND THE BALL TO YOUR FOOT...

A LOUSY PLAYER SHOULD JUST KICK IN A GENERAL DIRECTION!
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.
IT'S 10 YEARS TOO SOON FOR YOU TO EVEN ATTEMPT THAT PASS!
TOSS

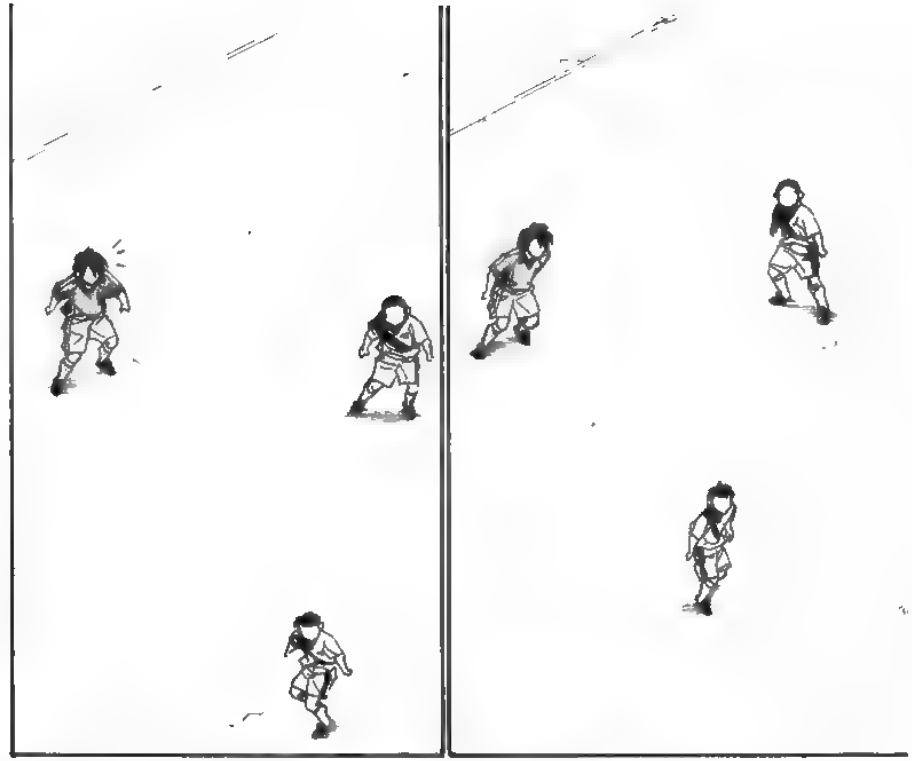
!
B
TP
THANKS!
HUH?
VWIP
IDIOT!
WATCH YOUR BACK!!
DON'T BOTHER TO THANK ME!
... GETTING A PASS?
WHAT AN EMBARRASSMENT.
WHO'D GET THAT EXCITED ABOUT...
THAT WAS CLOSE. SHEESH.

TATSUYA.
NO. 10 ISN'T WORN JUST BY PLAYMAKERS.
VOOM
URK.
IT'S MINE!
BOOM

GLANCE
SMILE
DOES HE HAVE SOME IDEA?
20
...IS BECAUSE RAKUYŌ'S DEFENSE IS STACKED TO THE RIGHT.
THE REASON WHY WE CAN'T BREAK THROUGH WHEN WE ATTACK FROM THE RIGHT SIDE...

WHOO
SH
BOOM
WHAT DOES HE HAVE IN MIND?
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE SENDS ME THE PASS.
I CAN'T GET THROUGH ON THIS SIDE.

HE'S ATTACKING ONLY THE RIGHT SIDE. THAT'S JUST ONE PATTERN.
HE'S JUST A TEMPORARY MIDFIELDER, AFTER ALL.
...THIS GUY.
NOT SO STUPID...

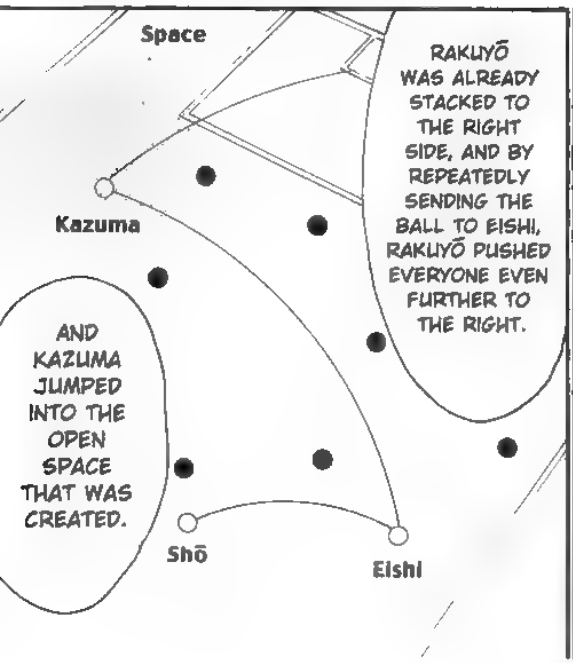


SO THAT'S IT.
I GOT IT.

I KNOW!
EISHI!

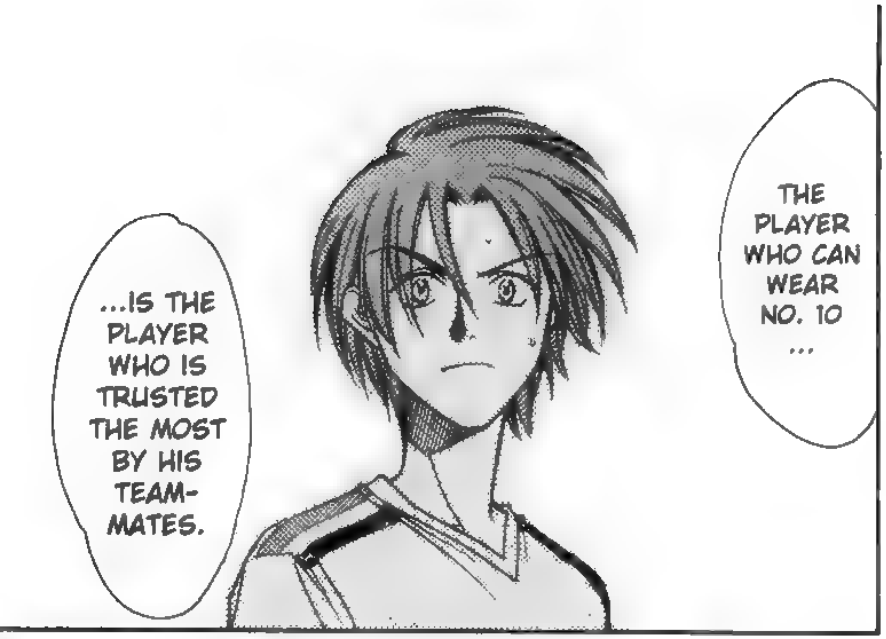
LONG BALL ?!
FOO
GO!

DIRECT ATTACK?
WHA ?!
GOOOO



RAKUYŌ WAS ALREADY STACKED TO THE RIGHT SIDE, AND BY REPEATEDLY SENDING THE BALL TO EISHI, RAKUYŌ PUSHED EVERYONE EVEN FURTHER TO THE RIGHT.

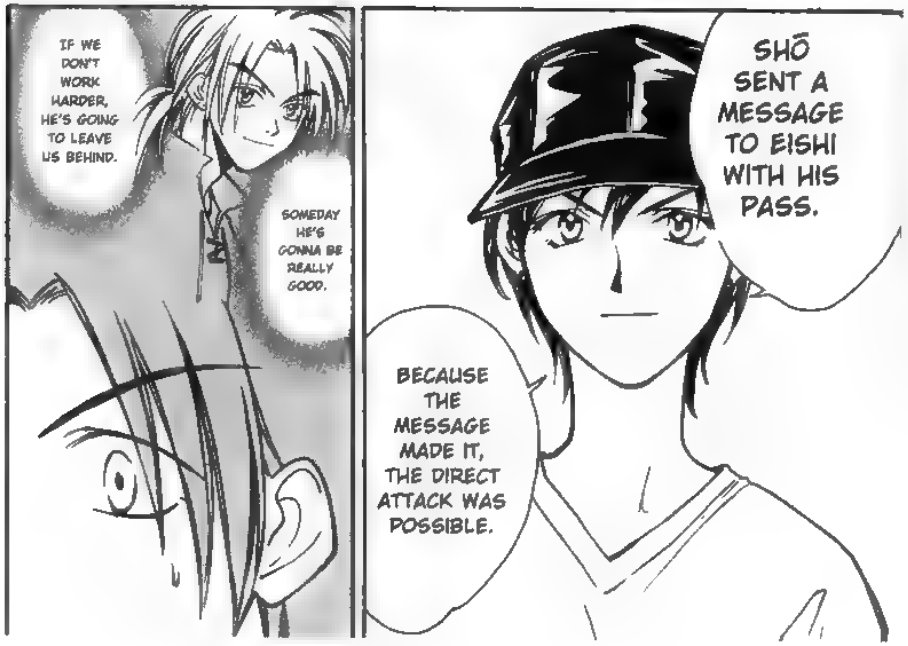
AND KAZUMA JUMPED INTO THE OPEN SPACE THAT WAS CREATED.


THE PLAYER WHO CAN WEAR NO. 10 ...
...IS THE PLAYER WHO IS TRUSTED THE MOST BY HIS TEAM-MATES.

THE PLAYER WHO CAN HELP THE TEAM WHEN THE TEAM IS IN TROUBLE.
SOMEONE EVERYONE CAN DEPEND ON.

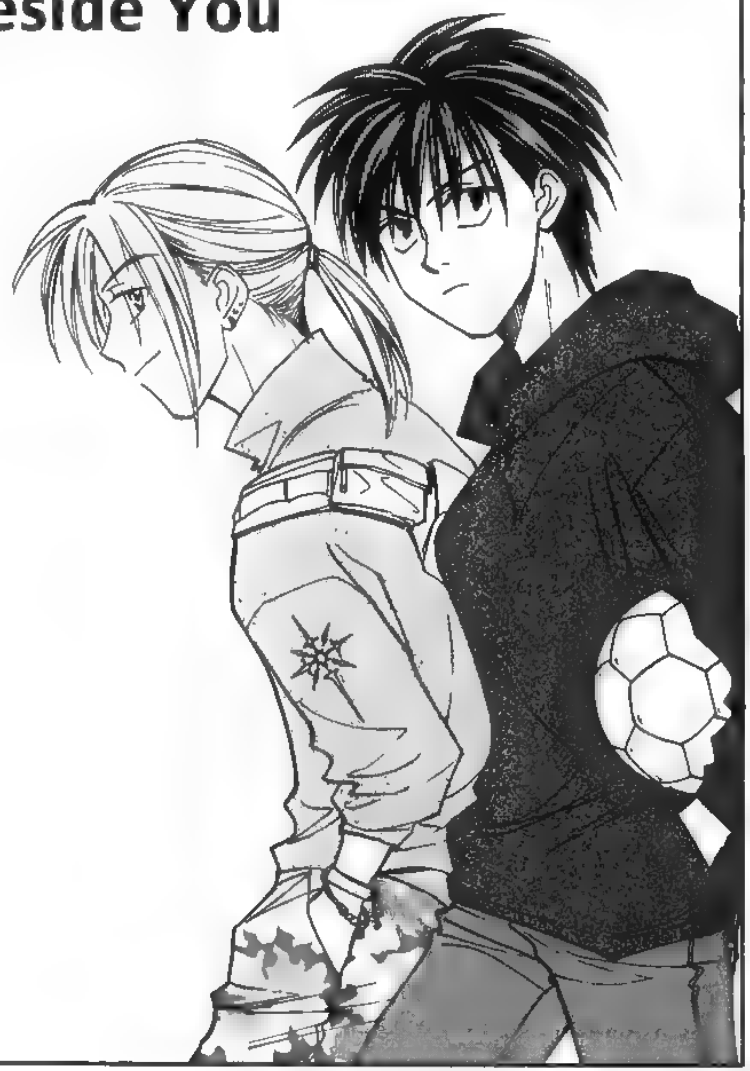
AND SHŌ HAD THE LONG BALL SENT OVER THERE.
THAT'S RIGHT.

WITH EISHI'S ACCURATE KICK IN MIND, SHŌ RELIED ON HIM.
HE ALSO CALCULATED THE FACT EISHI AND KAZUMA COORDINATE WELL WITH EACH OTHER.


SHŌ SENT A MESSAGE TO EISHI WITH HIS PASS.
BECAUSE THE MESSAGE MADE IT, THE DIRECT ATTACK WAS POSSIBLE.
IF WE DON'T WORK HARDER, HE'S GOING TO LEAVE US BEHIND.
SOMEDAY HE'S GONNA BE REALLY GOOD.

STAGE.139

The Talent of the Man Beside You



RUN!

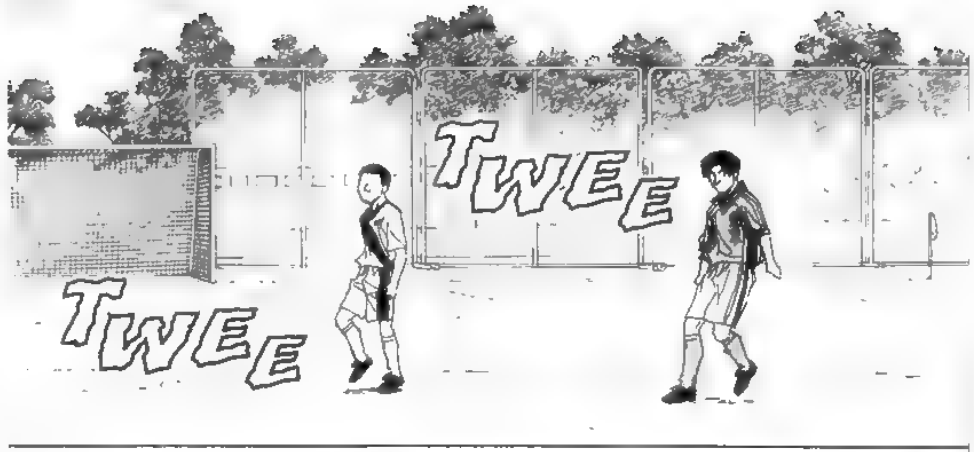
UNTIL JUST A WHILE AGO...
...THEY WERE IN CHAOS...
BALL!
...BUT NOW THEY ARE UNITED !!

...IS CLEARING THE FIELD.
THE WIND...

AND AT THE CENTER OF IT...

...IS SHŌ!!

TWEE


TWEE
TWEE

...OF THE TALENT SHŌ KAZAMATSURI POSSESSES.

AS A PLAYER...
...I BECAME CONSCIOUS FOR THE FIRST TIME...

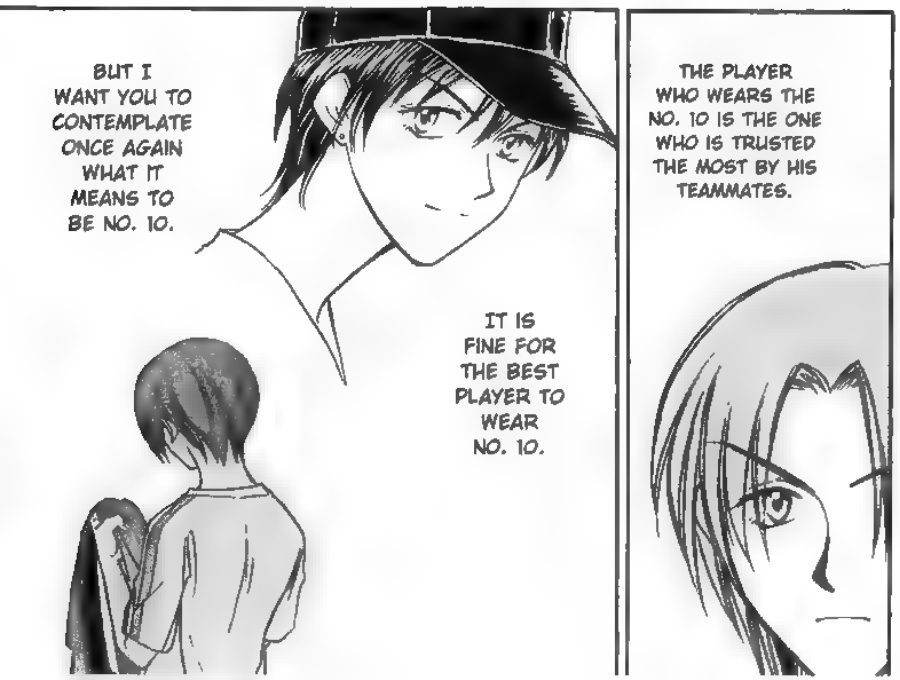
....SUDDENLY FEELS LIKE SOMEONE I'VE NEVER MET BEFORE.

A PERSON I KNEW SO WELL....

SURE.

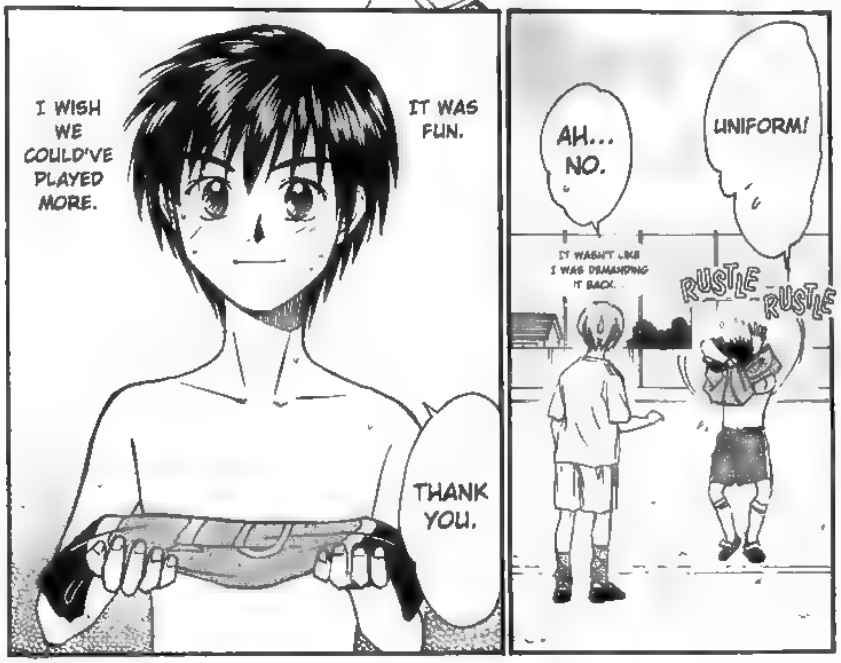
HA HA.
OF COURSE.

NO, IT'S OKAY! I'LL WASH IT
GRAB
AH. I SHOULD LAUNDER IT BEFORE I...


BUT I WANT YOU TO CONTEMPLATE ONCE AGAIN WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NO. 10.
IT IS FINE FOR THE BEST PLAYER TO WEAR NO. 10.
THE PLAYER WHO WEARS THE NO. 10 IS THE ONE WHO IS TRUSTED THE MOST BY HIS TEAMMATES.

I'M SORRY.

HUH?
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING?


I WISH WE COULD'VE PLAYED MORE.
IT WAS FUN.
THANK YOU.
AH... NO.
UNIFORM!
IT WASN'T LIKE I WAS DEMANDING IT BACK.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

I DON'T THINK SO.

YEAH.
SHE TOLD YOU.
IT MUST BE COACH SAIONJI.

YOU GUYS ARE THE BEST, AFTER ALL.
WE ENDED WITH A TIE AFTER WE WERE TOLD OF YOUR WEAKNESSES AND GIVEN A STRATEGY TO BEAT YOU.

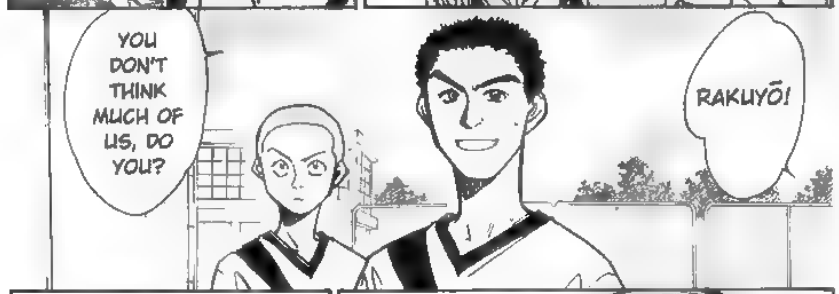
...SO I SOUGHT RAKUYŌ'S COOPERATION. THAT'S ALL.
I WANTED YOU TO TRULY EXPERIENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM-WORK...

... ABOUT ?!
WHAT'S THAT...

DANG IT!

SO SAYS YOU!

1 TO 1 AT THE END, HUH?
IT'S THE SAME AS LOSING ...
..TO TIE WITH AN OPPONENT WE SHOU..D EASILY BEAT!


YOU DON'T THINK MUCH OF US, DO YOU?
RAKUYŌ!

WANNA TRY A REMATCH?

I COULD NAME ONE, BUT...
CAN YOU DO IT? ON YOUR OWN?
WE NEED TO DECIDE ON YOUR CAPTAIN BY THE NEXT PRACTICE! ♡
AH.
THAT REMINDS ME.
OKAY. OKAY.
YOU MUST BE WIPED.
CHUCKLE ♡
WE'LL DO IT!
WE'RE NOT FOOLS.
YOU IDIOT!
NO ONE DENIES THAT WE HAD TEAMWORK ISSUES, RIGHT?
IT WAS A NASTY TRICK, BUT VERY EFFECTIVE, NONETHELESS.
SO, WE WERE JUST DANCING ON THE COACH'S PALM AFTER ALL.
SHE'S TOTALLY TREATING US LIKE BRATS! THAT OLD HAG!
GAAH!
WE'RE BRATS ..?

...YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO WIN IF THE TEAM IS IN DISARRAY. SOCCER IS A SPORT OF TEAMWORK.
BUT WHEN YOU PLAY AGAINST AN OPPONENT AT YOUR LEVEL OR BETTER...
INDIVIDUALLY, YOU HAVE GREAT SKILLS. YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO WIN AGAINST A WEAKER TEAM.
THIS WAY, YOU FEEL IT IN YOUR BONES. AM I RIGHT?
GRIN
IF I PUT IT INTO WORDS, YOU MAY THINK YOU UNDERSTAND THAT FACT, BUT YOU WON'T.
AS I THOUGHT.
SNEER

IF WE'D HAD AN EXTENDED GAME, WE MIGHT'VE WON!
BUT WE BECAME MORE UNIFIED TOWARDS THE END!
HOW ARE WE GOING TO CHOOSE A CAPTAIN?
BUT WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT KIND OF TEAM WE'RE GOING TO BE.
HA HA
THAT'S NOT FOR YOU TO SAY, SCREW UP.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, IT'S GOTTA BE ME !!
A TEAM THAT FIGHTS WITH SPEED AND POWER!
BRUTE FORCE OFFENSE!
WE'LL PUNCH IN GOALS LIKE A BATTERING RAM!
102
READ THIS WAY
TO LEAD A TEAM, YOU GOTTA HAVE SOME CHARISMA.
TA-KASHI.
Pfft Pfft
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS, ARE YOU?
FROM THAT POINT OF VIEW, I'M PERFECTLY SUITED...
THAT'S A STUPID QUESTION.
HA!
ARE YOU SAYING YOU CAN DO THAT?
A SIMPLE-TON, WHO CAN ONLY BOAST ABOUT HIS POWER ...
...CAN NEVER HANDLE SOMETHING AS COMPLICATED AS UNIFYING A TEAM, RIGHT?
103

KATSU-
RŌ!
YOU TWO!
GIVE IT A REST!
CAPTAIN KATSURŌ!
YUP! NO COMPLAINTS HERE.
OF COURSE! IF IT'S KATSURŌ ...

YOU'RE TOO HARSH. I'M TOO SENSITIVE TO DEAL WITH IT.
YOU'RE BETTER THAN TAKASHI, BUT...
DEFENSE WILL BE THE KEY COMPONENT OF SOCCER TEAMS IN THE FUTURE.
IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR ME TO DO IT.

TWITCH
MIDGET ?!

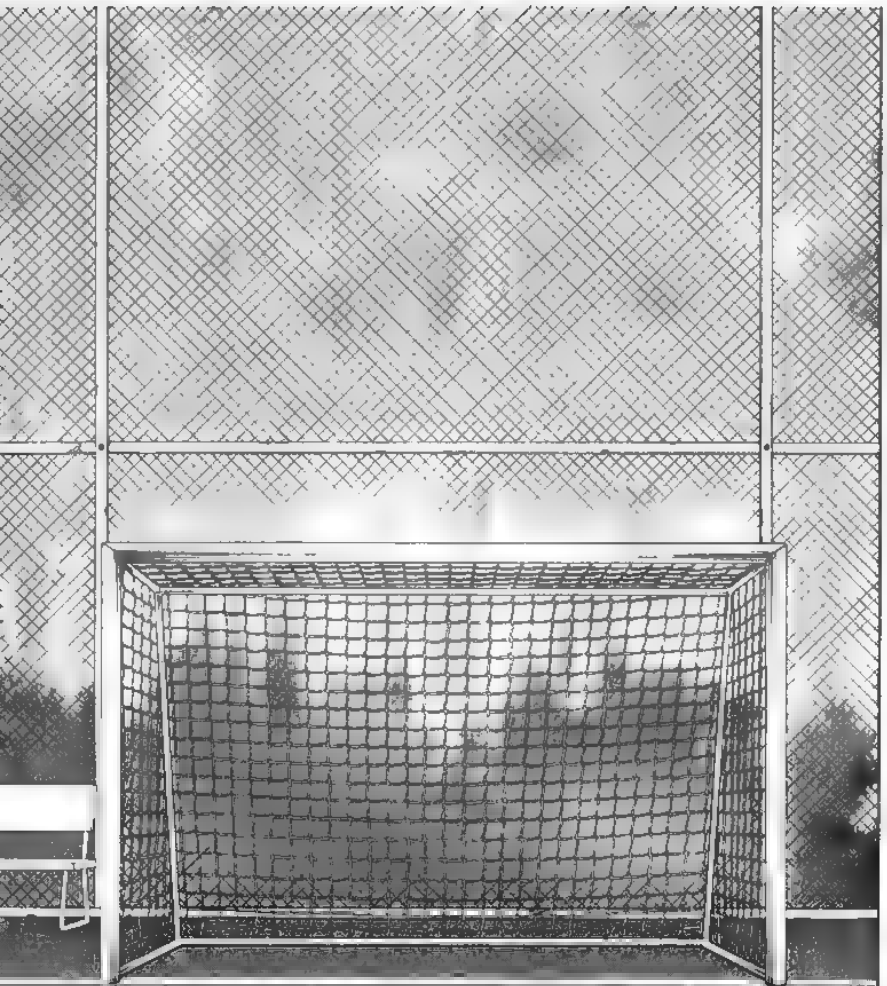
GLARE
PLUS, IT'S SO NOT COOL TO HAVE A MIDGET CAPTAIN.

NO ONE'S STOPPING THEM?
THAT'S ENOUGH!
TSU-BASA!

WHAT?! MIDGET, MIDGET, MIDGET!
WHO ARE YOU TO SAY WHAT'S COOL?!
YOU'RE A GIANT DOOFUS!
CAVE MAN!
I DON'T LIKE GUYS WITH A SMALL VOCABU-LARY.
AT IT AGAIN.
SHEESH.

WHETHER OR NOT WE PULL IT OFF WILL DEPEND ON THAT BOY'S CONTRIBUTION.
AREN'T YOU GOING TO TELL THEM WHAT KIND OF TEAM YOU'RE GOING TO BUILD?
IT'S A GAMBLE. BUT IF IT'S POSSIBLE, THEY'LL BECOME AN INCREDIBLE TEAM.
EVEN IF I EXPLAIN, WHO KNOWS IF THEY'D UNDERSTAND?
MELDING VARIOUS STYLES OF PLAY.
IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE?
I WILL BECOME A GREAT PLAYER!
UNSTABLE AND RISKY. I CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF THEM FOR A SECOND...
BUT IT'LL TURN INTO AN AMAZING TEAM.

WHAT?
HEH HEH
I SEE. I'LL ACCEPT, THEN.
IF IT'S YOU, KATSURŌ, NO ONE COMPLAINS.
IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE GOT NO CHANCE AT ALL.
I THINK SO, TOO.
I HAVE A FEELING THIS WILL TURN INTO AN INTERESTING TEAM.
THEY MIGHT ARGUE ...
... BUT THEY AGREE WHILE THEY'RE DOING IT.
ONCE I DO THE WORK, IT WON'T BE A DREAM TO PLAY IN THE GAME ANYMORE.
BY PLAYING THE GAME, I COULD SEE IT CLEARLY. I'VE GOT A LOT OF WORK TO DO.

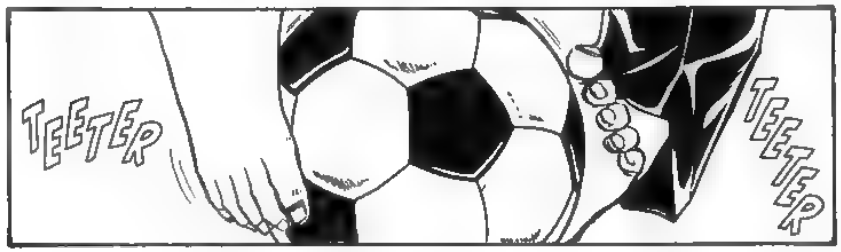


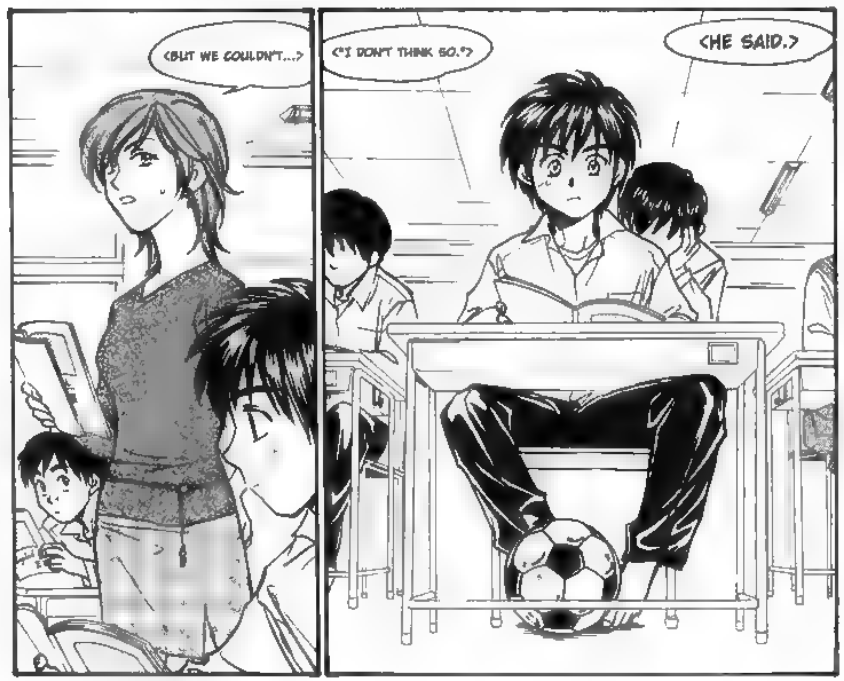
STAGE.140
Chance Meeting

WHISTLE!

HOW DO YOU SAY "GAMUSHARA NI YARE" IN ENGLISH?
SHŌ.
<JUST DO IT!>
RRING RRING
CORRECT.
SO TAKE YOUR TIME AND DECIDE, OKAY?
I'LL BE COLLECTING THIS FORM NEXT WEEK.
KNEADING THE BALL, HUH?
AHH, SHE MADE ME NERVOUS.
NOW, LET'S MOVE ON TO HOME-ROOM...
THAT'S IT FOR TODAY!

Jonoi Junior High School

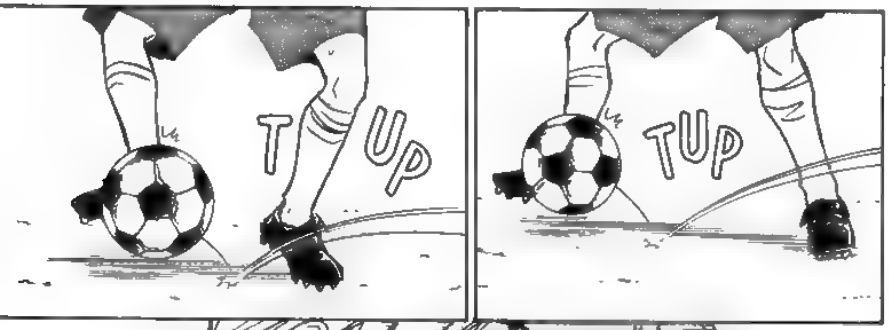

TEETER
TEETER


<BUT WE COULDN'T...>
<"I DON'T THINK SO.">
<HE SAID.>

HAVE YOU ALREADY MADE A DECISION, YUKI?
OF COURSE! A HIGH SCHOOL WITH A GIRLS' SOCCER CLUB!
WHICH IS?
GOING ABROAD.
BUT RECENTLY, I'M THINKING ABOUT ANOTHER OPTION.
OF COURSE. IT WAS SILLY TO EVEN ASK.
THERE'S NO FUTURE FOR A FEMALE SOCCER PLAYER IN JAPAN.
BUT I WANT TO BECOME A LOT BETTER!
I WANT TO PLAY AT A HIGHER LEVEL!

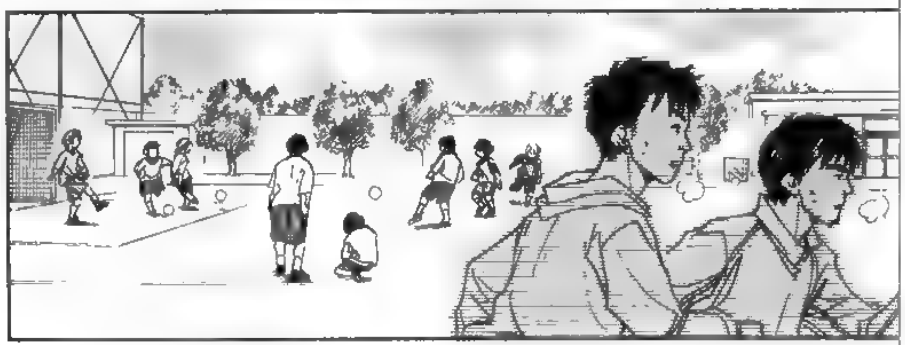
HIGH SCHOOL... HUH.
CAREER GUIDANCE INQUIRY
Desired Career
Desired School / Company
1st
2nd
Class
Name
HAVE YOU DECIDED WHICH HIGH SCHOOL?
NOT YET
CAREER GUIDANCE INQUIRY
CRUMPLE
YOU'RE DEEP IN THOUGHT. THAT'S UNUSUAL.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO KNOW WHAT I WANT TO DO WITH THE REST OF MY LIFE?
I HEARD THAT.

IT SORT OF SURPRISES ME. I MEAN, DON'T YOU THINK HE'S BECOME EVEN MORE MODEST?
NOW THAT HE'S WITH THE SELECT TEAM, I THOUGHT HE'D BECOME A SHOW-OFF...
BUT HE'S BEEN DOING THE INSIDE PASSES FOR 15 MINUTES NOW. I'M AMAZED HE DOESN'T GET TIRED OF IT.


TUP
TUP

I'VE HAD IT! JERK!
OKAY. DIRECT THE NEXT ...
FAST... ACCURATE ...
HE'S RETURNING IT WITH PINPOINT ACCURACY IMPRESSIVE
HE'S NOT JUST RETURNING IT.

...THAT I'M PLAYING SOCCER FOR A LIVING.
BECAUSE I'VE DECIDED ...



THAT'S OKAY.
HE'S REALLY FOCUSED, ISN'T HE?
SHŌ!
HOW ABOUT YOU, SHŌ?
BOOM
NO SURPRISE THERE.
ANY SCHOOL I CAN GET INTO WITH MY BRAIN.
MASATO, WHICH SCHOOL IS YOUR FIRST CHOICE?

THANKS COACH!
...
WHAT? FUTSAL?

BUT WITH FUTSAL, YOU CAN HAVE FOCUSED, CONTROLLED TRAINING.
DON'T THINK YOU'RE DONE YET, DO YOU?
ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU'LL JUST INJURE YOURSELF IF YOU OVER-PRACTICE.

SHIGEKI! WE'RE GOING TO PLAY FUTSAL. WANNA COME?
AH!
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?
THEY'LL HELP YOU LEARN MORE ABOUT IT.
OKAY.
YUKI AND THE OTHERS ARE USED TO IT.

THAT HURT, YOU...!

SMACK
ZOINK
OUH
ARE WE GOING TO DO BABY DRILLS FOREVER ?!
YOU'RE WITH THE SELECT TEAM. CAN'T YOU TEACH ME SOME INCREDIBLE TECHNIQUE...?

SHŌ! I'LL HELP YOU...ER... PLEASE ALLOW ME TO TRAIN WITH YOU AS LONG AS YOU WANT!

GLARE

AND THE EXPERIENCE.
"STOP AND KICK." IT'S SIMPLE ENOUGH, BUT REPEATED PRACTICE IS WHAT IT TAKES TO DO IT PROPERLY DURING A REAL GAME.
A FIRM FOUNDATION SUPPORTS THE TECHNIQUE.
TRAINING NOTES (SHŌ)
IF I JUST DO MY REGULAR PRACTICE, I WON'T BE ABLE TO CATCH UP TO THEM. I'VE GOT TO PLAY A LOT OF GAMES.

WOW.
PRETTY BUSY, HUH?
IT GETS CROWDED IN THE EVENINGS AND ON WEEK-ENDS.
YOU MEAN WHEN PEOPLE AREN'T WORKING?
YEAH, YOU KNOW, PEOPLE STOP OFF ON THE WAY HOME.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE, TOO. SOME OF THEM ARE MIXED TEAMS WITH GIRLS, WOMEN AND KIDS.
FUTSAL IS FOR "ANYONE, ANY-WHERE, ANYTIME."
BALL!
A LITTLE HELP?!
HEYYY!
THAT GUY'S LOUD.
YOU TWO SHOULD GO JOIN SOME TEAM.
YOU CAN PLAY TWO HOURS FOR 500 YEN.
ANYWAY, WE'VE GOT A COURT RESERVED.
NOOO! WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?

SORRY.
I'VE GOT SOME PRIVATE BUSINESS.
I'M OFF.
TATSUYA, WANT TO COME, TOO? TO FUTSAL?
YES.
LET'S GO, PUPPY.
TAKE IT EASY ...
I FOUND OUT ABOUT IT ON THE INTERNET. LATELY, FUTSAL COURTS ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE.
HMM, IT'S IN A PARK?

DO SOME MORE!
GREAT!
AWE-SOME!
YES!!
GRIN
WHAT? WANNA SEE?
...DON'T FALL IN LOVE!
I DON'T MIND DOING IT, BUT...

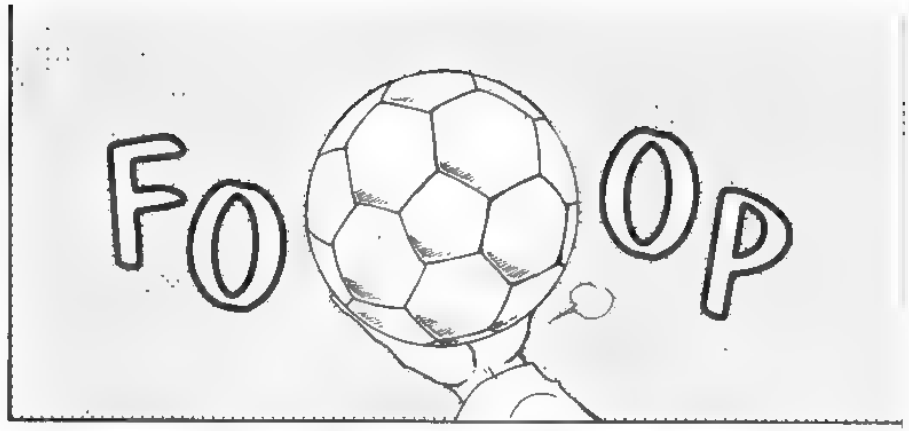
BEAM
NICE PASS!
OH! GOOD ONE!
OKAY.
FOOM
!
BLOOP
HE'S GOOD.
♪
VWIP

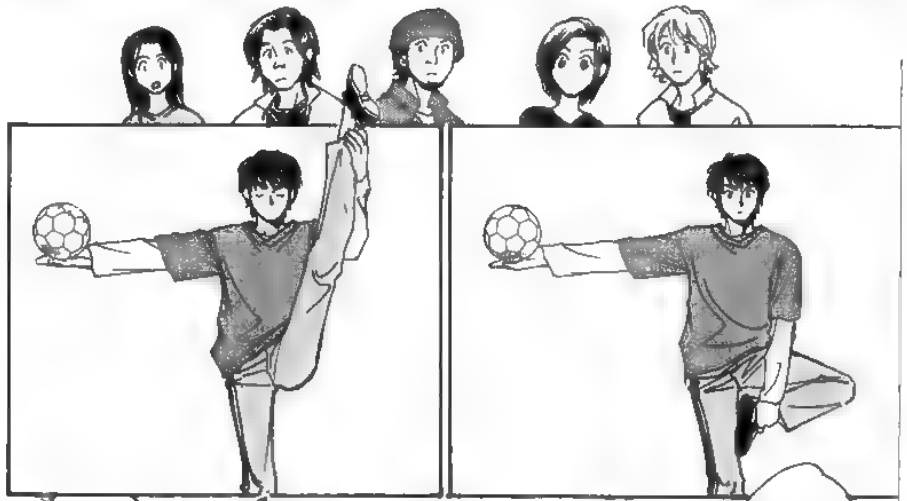
AND FAST!
YO.
THAT GUY...
...IS AGILE!

MASA-HIRO!
HEY, WHAT DID YOU SAY?
JEALOUS OF THE ATTENTION?
A WEIRDO.
WHO IS HE?

WELL ... UM...
ARE WE READY TO START?
I JUST FINISHED WARMING UP.
YASU!

THE WAY HE HANDLES THE BALL ...AND HIS REFLEXES. HE ISN'T SOME NOBODY.
WHAT? HE PLAYS FUTSAL TOO?
HANG ON. I'LL FIND SOMEONE.
EVERY-ONE'S GONE TO WORK.
WHAT? WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE?


FOOP



WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
HA
HA
WE LOSE!
MODERN DANCE!!
FROM A TV COMMERCIAL!

BIP

AH.
HE'S STARING AT ME.
THUMP

STAGE.141
A Man Called Masahiro Suō

WHISTLE!

ASSISTANT: K. HAMMER

HE WAS PRACTICALLY INVISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE IN GRADE SCHOOL.
BUT HE STARTED GROWING LIKE CRAZY AFTER HE GOT TO HIGH SCHOOL.
SHUT UP!
YASU.
ONCE I'M IN HIGH SCHOOL, I WILL, TOO...
NICE SAVE.
AND YOU'RE ONE TO TALK.
YOU DIDN'T LOOK LIKE A JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT... I'M SORRY.
IT'S OKAY.
CHATTER
WHO ARE THOSE TWO BRATS?
THEY'VE GOT DIFFERENT MEMBERS TODAY.
IT'S "TEAM FOUR."
CHATTER
UM. NOT SO SURE ABOUT THAT.
WE'LL BEAT YOU TODAY.
TONS OF ONLOOKERS. MAYBE HE'S SOMEONE FAMOUS.

YOU'RE HERE TO PLAY FUTSAL, RIGHT?
GRIN
A NEW FACE, HUH?

EVEN A GRADE SCHOOL STUDENT IS WELCOME, YOU KNOW?
WINK
WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH PLAYERS, SO DO YOU WANNA JOIN US?

OH NO! SORRY! I'M SORRY!
?
WA HA HA
DID YOU HEAR THAT?! GRADE SCHOOL!
SHI-GEKI.

HO
OF
ACK.
HEY!
THAT'LL MAKE IT A LOT EASIER TO LOOK AROUND.
BOMB.
NO WORRIES.
I'M SORRY.
GR
IP
TRY USING THE BACK OF YOUR FOOT MORE.

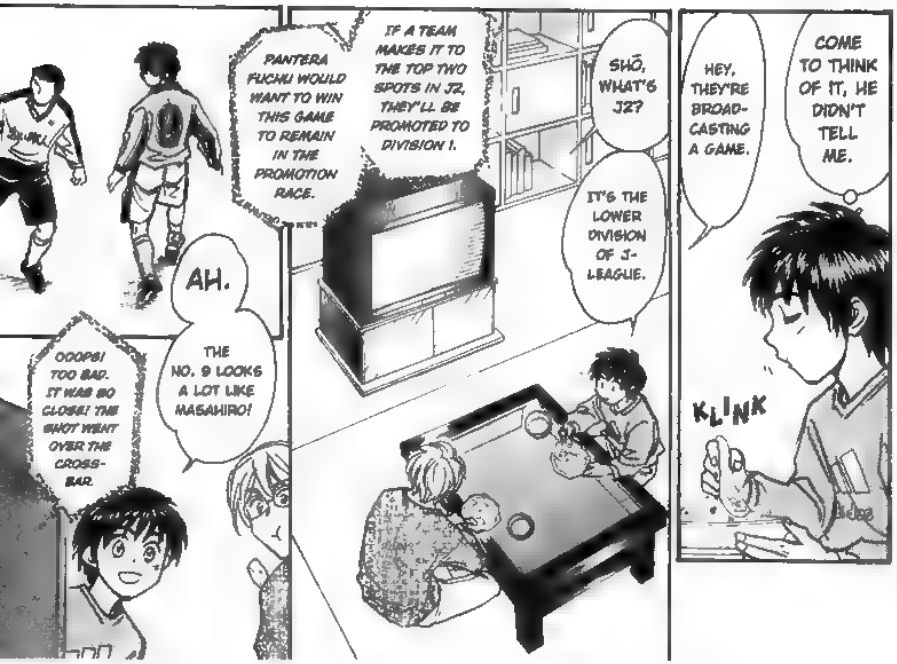
TWEE
VOO
HUH?
SH
DRIB-BLE?
PASS ?
OH.
HE'S PRETTY GOOD.

LOOP PASS?
BOOM
FOOSH
BOOOM

...AND SHOOT!
...TURN AROUND WITH THE BACK OF YOUR FOOT...
SPIN
THEN ...
I'VE GOT TO REACT FASTER.
OTHERWISE, I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THE SPEED OF FUTSAL.
YEAH!
WOW

AH, HE IS ...
MY JOB?
CAN'T TELL YOU.

LET'S PLAY AGAIN. SEE YA.
OUCH.
SHUT IT, YASU!
FEW
AK
... ACTUALLY ...


PANTERA FUCHU WOULD WANT TO WIN THIS GAME TO REMAIN IN THE PROMOTION RACE.
IF A TEAM MAKES IT TO THE TOP TWO SPOTS IN J2, THEY'LL BE PROMOTED TO DIVISION 1.
SHŌ, WHAT'S J2?
IT'S THE LOWER DIVISION OF J-LEAGUE.
AH.
THE NO. 9 LOOKS A LOT LIKE MASAHIRO!
OOOPS! TOO BAD. IT WAS SO CLOSE! THE SHOT WENT OVER THE CROSS-BAR.
HEY, THEY'RE BROAD-CASTING A GAME.
COME TO THINK OF IT, HE DIDN'T TELL ME.
KLINK

SMAP
DID IT!

NO. AGAINST US!
PLAY AGAINST US NEXT!

HI
DIDN'T SEEM LIKE A STUDENT.
SO I ACTUALLY ASKED, BUT...
MASA-HIRO IS SUCH A GREAT PLAYER.
WHERE DOES HE WORK?

FSSS
FSS
WE PLAYED THREE MORE TEAMS AFTER THAT.
I'M WIPED, BUT IT WAS A LOT OF FUN.

HE'S ...
...A PROFESSIONAL PLAYER IN J2.
I PLAYED FUTSAL WITH HIM YESTERDAY!
BRO! THAT'S HIM! HE'S MASAHIRO.
OOPS, IT'S GETTING ROUGH OUT THERE.
30 MINUTES PASSED IN THE SECOND HALF. 2-1. ŌITA IS IN THE LEAD BY ONE POINT.
HE LOOKS LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSON FROM WHEN HE WAS PLAYING FUTSAL.
HE'S ATTACKING!
WHY NOT?! THAT WAS ...
FOUL! NO, IT'S NOT. THE REFEREE LET IT PASS.

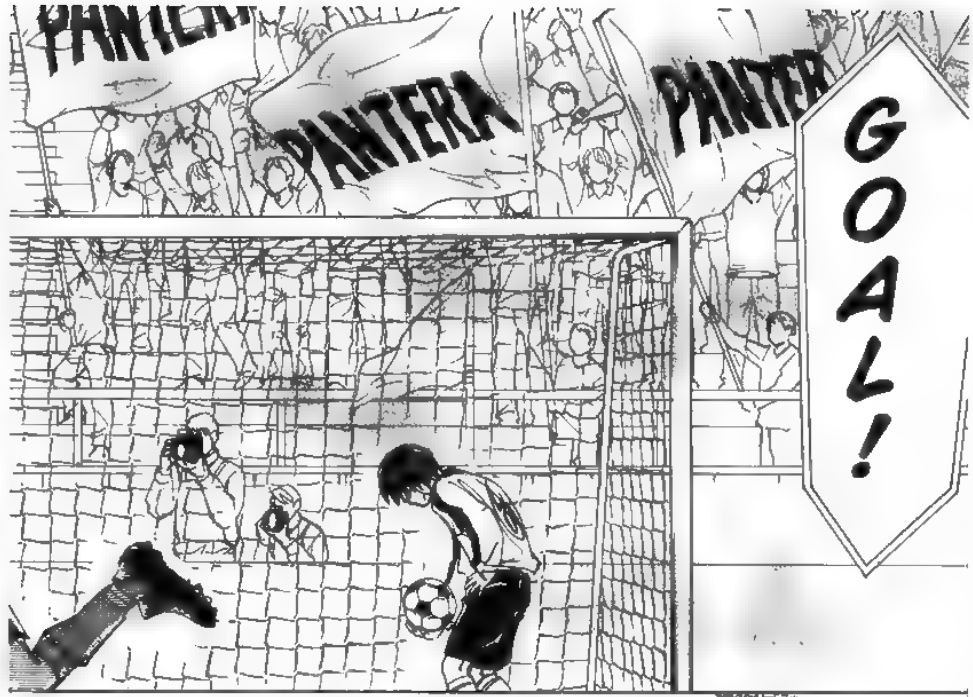
WHAM
SUŌ LOOKS VERY UPSET!
9 Forward Masahiro Suō
MASA-HIRO!

HE BROKE THROUGH!
PASS ...NO!
HE STOPPED?!
HE WENT FOR IT HIM-SELF !!
HE DID THAT IN FUTSAL! THE FAKE, USING THE BACK OF THE FOOT!

NO. 9 SUŌ IS MARKED BY THREE PLAYERS?
THE GOAL IS BEHIND HIM! THEY WON'T LET HIM FACE THE GOAL!

RETURN IT FOR NOW AND...
SUŌ!
GRAB

THE GAME IS TIED!!


PANTERA
PANTERA
PANTER
GOAL!

CLUNK
TRIP
YOOM

HE HASN'T GIVEN UP!
BUT THERE'S HARDLY ANY TIME LEFT!
NOT YET.

CHEAP
...
STAB
SHUDDER
FOOM

OUCH ...
I...ooo
...WANT TO PLAY LIKE THAT!
THUMPA
GRIP
adidas

GOAL!
THE GAME IS REVERSED IN THE NICK OF TIME!
THUMPA
I HOPE HE'S OKAY.
SUŌ MADE A FANTASTIC ASSIST.
THUMPA
GRIP

STAGE.142

Don't Talk So Small (FEEL THE DESTINY)

●J2●

J-LEAGUE STARTED IN 1993 WITH 10 TEAMS. AFTER THAT, THE TOP TWO TEAMS OF THE JFL (WHICH IS THE CURRENT J2) THAT QUALIFIED TO JOIN J1 WERE PROMOTED TO J LEAGUE EACH YEAR.

AS A RESULT, BY THE YEAR 1998, THE J-LEAGUE HAD MUSHROOMED TO 18 TEAMS. SO, IN 1999, J-LEAGUE WAS DIVIDED INTO DIVISION 1 AND DIVISION 2, AS J1 AND J2, AND RESTARTED WITH 16 TEAMS IN J1 AND 10 TEAMS IN J2.

AND STARTING IN 1999, THEY BEGAN AUTOMATICALLY SWAPPING THE BOTTOM TWO OF J1 WITH THE TOP TWO OF J2. IN ADDITION, EVEN IF THE TEAM BELONGED TO JFL, WHICH IS BELOW J2, IF THE TEAM PERFORMED WELL AND SATISFIED THE CONDITIONS FOR JOINING J-LEAGUE, IT WAS ALLOWED TO BE PROMOTED TO J2. MITO HOLLYHOCK WAS PROMOTED TO J2 IN 2000 AND YOKOHAMA FC IN 2001. CURRENTLY, IN 2001, THE J-LEAGUE CONSISTS OF J1 WITH 16 TEAMS AND J2 WITH 12 TEAMS, MAKING 28 TEAMS IN TOTAL.

PLAYERS IN J2 HAVE A ROUGH TIME OF IT. SOME TEAMS DON'T OWN THE PLACE WHERE THEY PRACTICE NOR DO THEY HAVE THEIR OWN CLUBHOUSES. EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE PROFESSIONAL TEAMS, SOME PLAYERS HAVE TO TAKE ON PART-TIME JOBS TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES. NOT ONLY THAT, THEY MUST ENDURE FOUR LONG TOURNAMENTS IN WHICH THEY PLAY AGAINST EVERY TEAM, WHICH ADDS UP TO 44 GAMES EVERY YEAR.

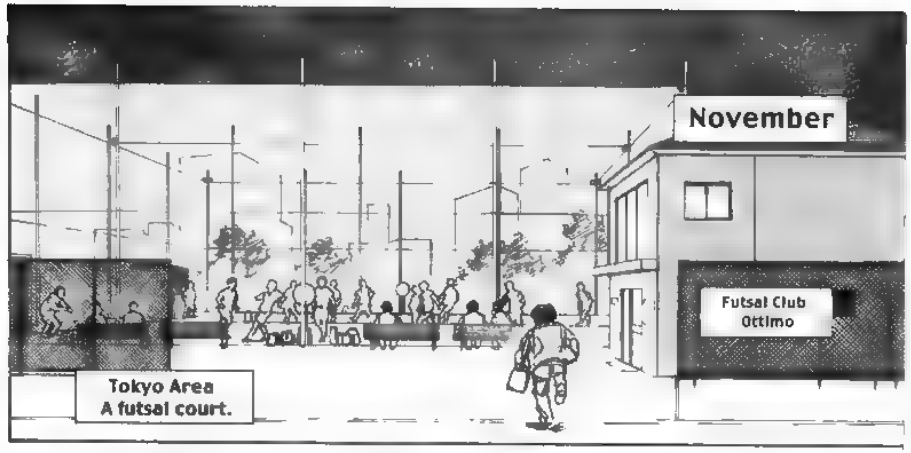
COMPARED TO J1, J2 MUST FACE THIS LONG, HARSH, LEAGUE BATTLE. DESPITE THE HARDSHIP, THEIR DREAMS ARE AS STRONG AS THAT OF PLAYERS IN J1. THE TEAMS ARE CHERISHED BY THE LOCAL FANS AND LOVED BY FANS OF THE SPORT THROUGHOUT JAPAN. IF AND WHEN J2 HOLDS A GAME IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, PLEASE GO WATCH THE PLAYERS WHO ARE WORKING HARD TO JOIN J1.

——**Tatsuya Watanabe (Winning Run)**

(AUTHOR'S VOICE)

IN REALITY, J1 AND J2 DID NOT BEGIN THEIR AUTOMATIC SWAPPING IN 1998. HOWEVER, FOR DRAMATIZATION PURPOSES, THAT FACT HAS BEEN CHANGED.

HUH?
VOOSH
BOOM
DASH
URK
HE'S LEANING ON ME, MAKING IT HARD TO MOVE
FWIP


November
Futsal Club Ottimo
Tokyo Area
A futsal court.

KANE-KO.
WATA-NABE.

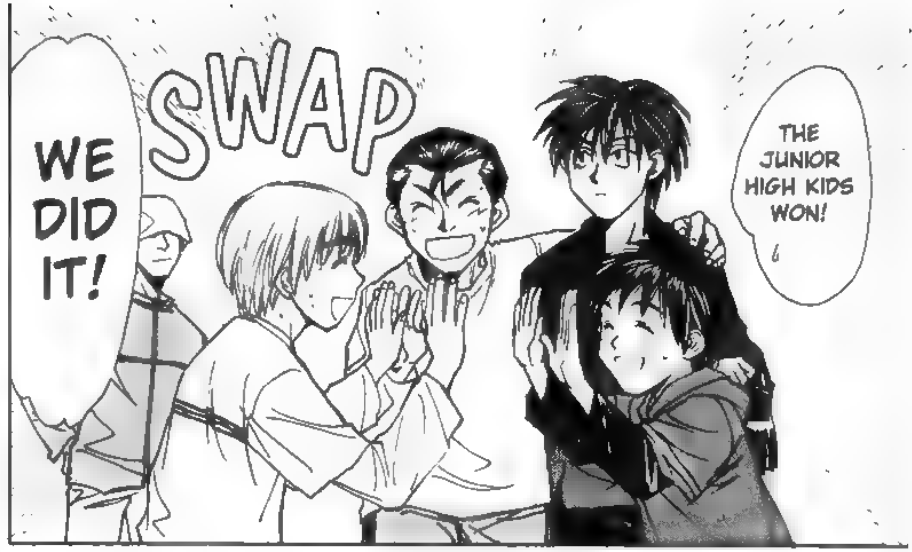
BOOM
KIDS VS. GROWNUPS, HUH?
OH.
PERFECT TIMING.
THIS IS KANEKO, MY ASSISTANT AND CAMERA-MAN.
SEE YOU LATER.
HELLO.
SORRY. IT TOOK A WHILE TO FINISH UP.
THE GROUP IN FRONT IS ABOUT TO FINISH.

BOOM
FWI
SSH
AH.
THOSE KIDS HAVE SOME MOVES.
NICE!
GAME OVER.
FUTSAL
JUNIOR HIGH KIDS VS. WILD 5
10
2nd HALF
07

PSH
PSH
GRIN
MISSED PASS?!
MUST BE DESPERATE. WHERE IS HE PASSING?
FOOM

YOU DID WELL, KID.
I'VE STILL GOT A LOT OF WORK TO DO.
ISN'T THE RUMOR ABOUT THEM?

YES, YES-SSS!
FIND SOMEONE FROM AROUND HERE...
WHO'S THAT OVER THERE?
WHAT? YOUR SIDE IS ONE PLAYER SHORT?
WELL, IT'S TRUE.
BIG.
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE A JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT.
YOU WERE WITH JUNIOR HIGH KI[redacted] TEAM EARLIER ...


WE DID IT!
SWAP
THE JUNIOR HIGH KIDS WON!

WHAT? IT'S A TEENY JUNIOR HIGH KID.
I HAVE. A TALL KID, RIGHT?
THIS REMINDS ME... HAVE YOU HEARD THE RUMOR ABOUT SOME AMAZING JUNIOR HIGH KIDS WHO ARE SHOWING UP AT FUTSAL COURTS?
LOOKS LIKE WE CAN'T TAKE JUNIOR HIGH KIDS LIGHTLY.

YUP.
LET'S DO IT AGAIN.
MY PLEASURE. IT WAS FUN.
SUGA, THANKS FOR HELPING OUT.
SMAP
TINY AND TALL...
IT'S A RUMOR AFTER ALL. PROBABLY EXAGGERATED.
IT SIMPLY MEANS MORE JUNIOR HIGH KIDS ARE PLAYING FUTSAL. IT'S A GOOD THING.

SELECT TEAM GETS TO PRACTICE JUST ONCE A MONTH, SO IF WE SIMPLY DID OUR REGULAR PRACTICE, WE'LL NEVER GET BETTER.
NOTHING BEATS PLAYING IN A REAL GAME.
DAICHI, YOU'VE RACKED UP SOME EXPERIENCE POINTS AS A GOAL KEEPER, TOO.
AND YES...

NEXT STOP IS AT SUIDŌ-BASHI.
YOU'RE A GOOD GUY, GIVING ME A HAND.
A HAND ...
ANYWAY, THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME.
IT'S THE NAME, FUTSAL, THAT'S BAD. IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE SOMETHING THAT'S GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH SOCCER.
YOU WERE LAUGHING AT FUTSAL AT FIRST.

TAKE IT EASY.
SEE YA!
NEXT WEEK THEN!
SHŌ, IT'S FINE TO PLAY FUTSAL EVERY DAY, BUT DON'T GO CRAZY, OKAY?
ME TOO.
OOPS. I GOTTA GET OFF.

I MAY NOT LOOK IT, BUT I AM A JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT.

THE TALL JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT FROM THE RUMOR!
AH.

SHŌ, YOUR DRIBBLING, PASSES AND FEINTS HAVE IMPROVED A LOT.
"BECOMING BETTER"? IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE A COMPLIMENT?
TEPPEI, YOU'RE BECOMING BETTER AT HANDLING THE BALL.
YOU'VE IMPROVED A LOT, BOTH OF YOU.
CHUGA

I WONDER IF MASAHIRO IS HERE.
GLANCE
GLANCE
I NEED TO FIND HIM!
HE IS!
IT'S A CRITICAL TIME FOR THE TEAM, TOO. I GUESS IT'S NO TIME TO BE PLAYING FUTSAL.
SCRATCH
FUTSAL COURTS ARE BRUTAL ON THE KNEES, YOU KNOW.
THEY FOUND OUT I WAS DOING FUTSAL, AND THE TEAM DOCTOR READ ME THE RIOT ACT.

CHUGGA
CHUGGA
DASH
DASH
...THAT I PLAYED FUTSAL WITH SOMEONE SO GOOD! I DID!
SO INCREDIBLE ...
IT'S INCREDIBLE!

AH, OF COURSE. THE TV BROADCAST FROM LAST NIGHT. HE FOUND OUT I'M A PRO, I GUESS.
THUMP
THUMP
I WANT TO LEARN FROM ME?
GLARE
WHAT'S THIS?
WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO BECOME A GREAT PLAYER...
...LIKE YOU?
Y...YES! I WANT TO BECOME A PLAYER LIKE YOU, MASA-HIRO!
SO, YOU PLAY SOCCER THEN?
IF I COULD, THAT WOULD BE NICE...
...I THINK.
... YES.
WHAT?
ER ...
YOU WANT TO BE A PRO, THEN?

YOU'RE NOT DOING IT ANY-MORE?
!
I MEAN, FUTSAL.
I'VE GOT...
...SO MUCH I WANT TO LEARN FROM YOU.
HUH... LITTLE GUY?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?
IN ONLY THREE YEARS, YOU'LL BE 17.
[redacted] AND MICHAEL OWEN BOTH MADE THEIR WORLD DEBUTS AT 17.
I'M GOING TO BE UN-STOP-PABLE!
MY GOAL IS THE WORLD CUP FOUR YEARS FROM NOW.
J2! THEN J1!
THEN THE NATIONAL TEAM!

IT WOULD BE NICE IF YOU COULD?
I'M NOT YOUR NURSE-MAID, JUNIOR!
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
FOURTEEN? NINE YEARS DIFFERENT FROM ME THEN?
FOU... FOUR-TEEN.
GRAB
MASA-HIRO!
JOLT

DON'T TALK SMALL, AND SAY YOUR GOAL IS TO BECOME LIKE ME.
YOU SHOULD BECOME A MASTER OF YOUR OWN GAME.

THIS MAN IS...
THUMPA
I'VE GOT NO TIME TO PLAY AROUND WITH YOU.
YOU'RE ACTING CHILDISH!
STOP IT, MASA-HIRO!
LITTLE MAN!
WAIT!
DAZE
DON'T SULK! SHEESH.
HMF!
I'M JUST A PUNK, I KNOW!
I'M SORRY, HE'S AN IDIOT.
HE ISN'T A BAD GUY, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO SOCCER, HE'S A BIT...

CIN CH
HEAD 21 INCHES.
WHY DID THIS BIG BANG TAKE PLACE?
I'M INVESTIGATING THE DRAMATIC CHANGES THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU THESE PAST THREE MONTHS.
THE INCREASED AMOUNT OF PRACTICE AND EXPOSURE TO THE SELECT TEAM DO NOT EXPLAIN IT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THERE IS NO CHANGE TO YOUR EXTERNAL APPEARANCE.
HEIGHT 4 FEET, 11 INCHES.
DAICHI?
ER...NO THANKS.
SHOULD I DISSECT YOU?
PANTERA FUCHS
VICTORY
CHECKMATE
SUŌ HAT TRICK
FIRA

ONCE YOU DO THAT, WE'LL PLAY...
...SOCCER.

DASH
I WILL SURPASS HIM!

I'M LAGGING BEHIND.
HE IS STEADILY RUNNING TOWARD HIS DREAM.
MASA-HIRO.
I HAVE TO DO THE SAME THING!
GRIP
SHUDDER
THANKS.
GRAB
AREN'T YOU GETTING OFF, SHŌ?

STAGE.143
The Heart in Another Country

DAICHI FUWA'S OBSERVATION REPORT

I am Daichi Fuwa, an 8th grader at Josui Junior High. At this time, I will make public a part of my report that details my observation and analysis of various events that took place around me. The report includes illustrations.

ASSISTANT F

EDITED BY ASSISTANT K. HAMMER & OTHER PRECOCIOUS ASSISTANTS.

On the last day of the select team training camp, Tatsuya appeared to think he had failed when he was changed in the middle of a game.

As you can see in the illustration, not only were his eyes wide open, he was secreting his oily sweat profusely and his nostrils were also swelling up considerably.

Anyhow, it's easy to see how shocked he was.

Even though I failed the selection process, I ventured to observe the select team. It is quite interesting to note that Takashi thought Shō was losing his nerve when Shō was only looking for space to attack and was fully aware of the state of the game.

By the way, there's a chance that the man known as Takashi Narumi may be falsifying his age.
My estimate suggests he's 25 years old or... oops, I'm deviating from my main point.

Well, I can surmise that Shō is in Takashi's mind quite a bit.

Sorry, but this illustration was drawn without good reference material. It's supposed to be a man called Shigeru who was chosen for the select team.

Ever since I saw him, I've had some misgivings about him. He sure has a strange face.

I must spend more time studying his bizarre countenance.

READ THIS WAY

YEAH.
YOU CAN LEAVE THAT ONE ALONE.
GOOD MORNING.
THAT'S RIGHT BUY TWO THOUSAND SHARES OF AOTA ELECTRIC.
MY SECRETARY MESSED UP MY SCHEDULE. I'VE HAD BIG LOSSES ALREADY THIS MORNING.
IT'S UNUSUAL FOR YOU TO BE HERE AT THIS HOUR.
WE HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER FOR A WHILE, BUT SEEING ME IS A WASTE OF HIS TIME, I GUESS.
WHAT A WASTE OF MY TIME.
RYO-ICHI...

IT'S NOT OFFICIALLY DETERMINED YET...
YOU ARE A STARTER AT WHAT THEY CALL TOKYO SELECT, RIGHT?

IT'S [redacted] TO FOCUS YOUR ENERGY ON SOMETHING THAT'S MORE MEANINGFUL TO YOUR FUTURE.
CONTINUING TO DO SOMETHING YOU CAN'T MAKE ANYTHING OF IS THE SAME AS THROWING YOUR LIFE AWAY.
IF YOU CAN'T EVEN MAKE STARTER AT A LOCAL SELECT TEAM, THERE'S NO POINT IN PURSUING SOCCER.

...
THAT'S ...
...WHAT I THINK.

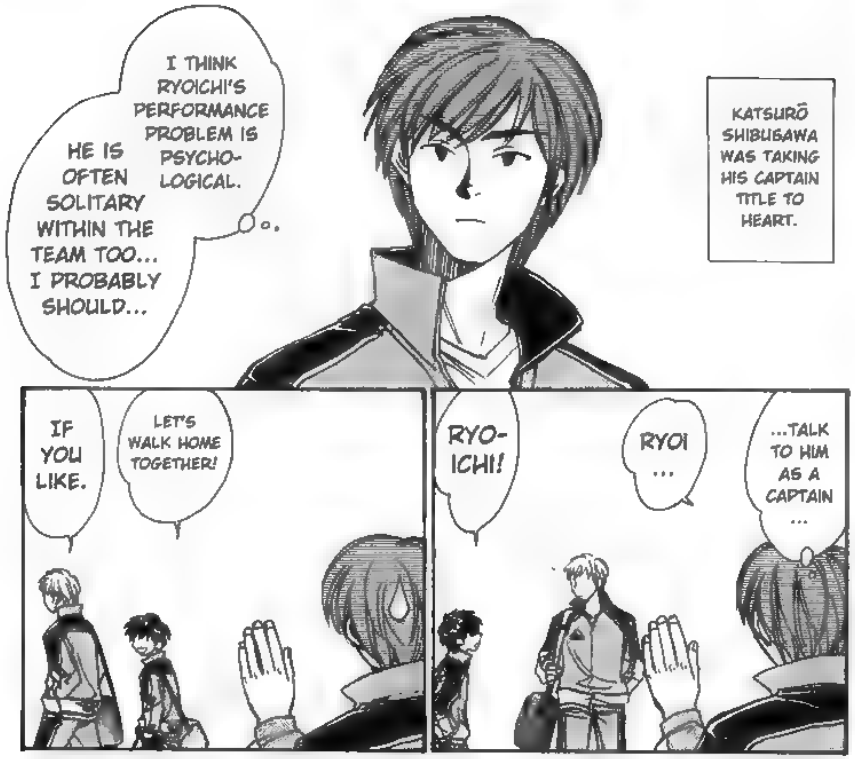
THIS WAY!
THIS WAY, I SAID!
MOVE!
IT'S LEFT! LEFT!
NICE PASS!
RYO-ICHI!
TWEE

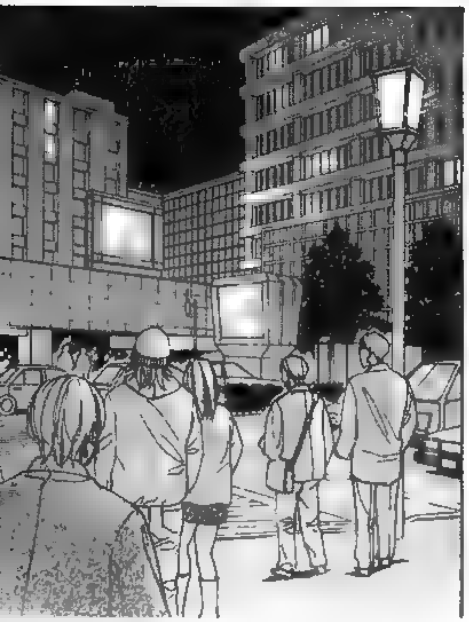
DASH
DASH
TWO OF THEM ARE ATTACKING TOGETHER.
WHICH ONE...?!
FOOM

DANG IT!
I KNOW!
YOUR TIMING ON THE ATTACK IS LATE.
HOW MANY TIMES ARE YOU GONNA GET NAILED BY THE OFFSIDE TRAP?
MY BODY FEELS HEAVY...
SINCE SEPTEMBER, HIS PERFORMANCE HAS DROPPED OFF.
I WONDER WHAT'S GOING ON. RYOICHI'S MOVES SEEM KIND OF LACK-LUSTER.

IF WE THINK OF THEM NOT AS FORWARDS, BUT TEPPEI AS WING AND SHŌ AS AN ATTACKING MIDFIELDER...
THEIR BALL HANDLING HAS IMPROVED, TOO. IT'S AS IF THEY'RE DIFFERENT PEOPLE.
...THEY'LL BECOME ATTRACTIVE ENOUGH AS SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS.
BOTH OF THEM!
RYO-ICHI!
BRING IT DOWN YOUR-SELF!
WHY DID YOU SEND A PASS?!
YES!

SWITCH ?!
FWIP
IF THEY CAN SWITCH WITH THAT MUCH SPEED...
TAKE-DOWN!
SWAP
WE DID IT!


I THINK RYOICHI'S PERFORMANCE PROBLEM IS PSYCHO-LOGICAL.
HE IS OFTEN SOLITARY WITHIN THE TEAM TOO... I PROBABLY SHOULD...
KATSURŌ SHIBUSAWA WAS TAKING HIS CAPTAIN TITLE TO HEART.
IF YOU LIKE.
LET'S WALK HOME TOGETHER!
RYO-ICHI!
RYOI ...
...TALK TO HIM AS A CAPTAIN ...

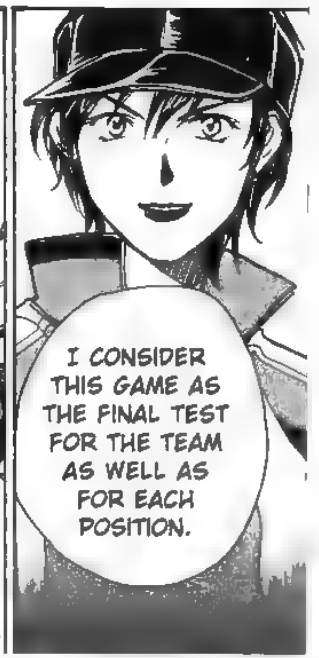


IT'S ALSO A CAPTAIN'S JOB TO DEAL WITH PLAYERS' GRIPES.
WILL YOU LISTEN TO THIS? THAT JERK, TAKASHI!
CAP! CAN YOU C'MERE?
ARE YOU LISTENING? CAPTAIN?
WHAT IS IT NOW?

THAT'S IT FOR TODAY'S PRACTICE.
AND I HAVE SOME NEWS.
THE SPECIFIC SCHEDULE IS STILL BEING WORKED OUT, BUT WE'LL LET YOU KNOW AS SOON AS THERE'S A DATE.
WE RECEIVED A GOODWILL REQUEST FROM KOREA FOR A GAME.

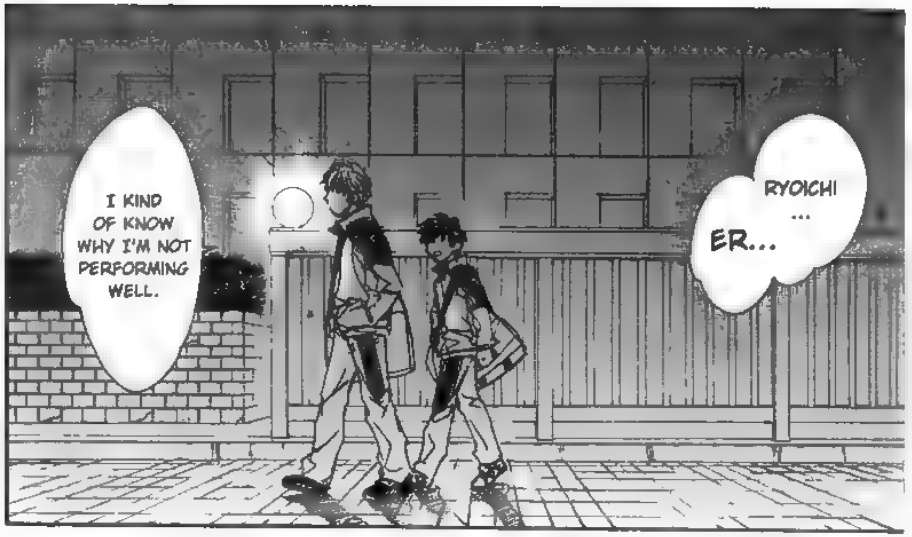
A GAME WITH KOREA

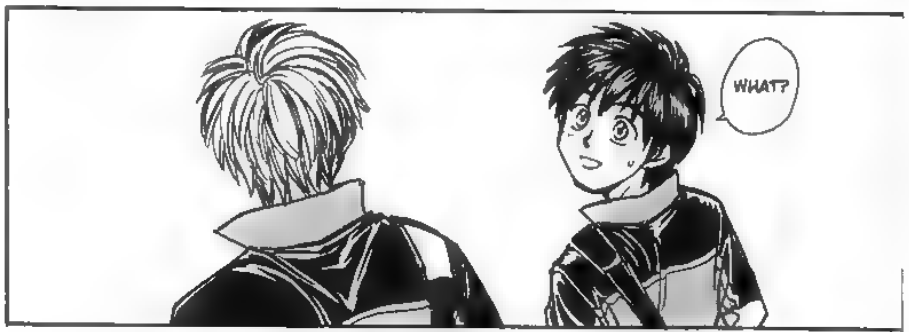
ALL OF YOU, PLEASE PREPARE WITH THAT IN MIND.


I CONSIDER THIS GAME AS THE FINAL TEST FOR THE TEAM AS WELL AS FOR EACH POSITION.

JUST A BUNCH OF LITTLE KIDS PLAYING SOCCER TOGETHER, HUH?
HOW SWEET
GET READY TO BE CRUSHED!
IF I KEEP TO MATCH YOUR SKILLS TO BE A PROFESSIONAL TODAY I'LL GET THERE.
AND SINCE BEING LIKE YOU IS MY GOAL
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I'LL BE BACK
AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE A PAIN IN THE BUTT.
YEAH ... TO BE HONEST, RYOICHI, YOU WERE SCARY BACK THEN.
...YOU HELPED ME OUT BY LETTING ME KICK THE BALL WITH YOU GUYS.
ALSO WHEN I WAS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE AFTER KAZUE DIED...

AND...
Marktstr
Germany
WHAT I FOUND INSIDE WAS A TINY, OLD PHOTO, AND AN ADDRESS WRITTEN IN GERMAN.
I DON'T KNOW WHY .
...I THOUGHT OF OPENING KAZUE'S TALISMAN AFTER THAT

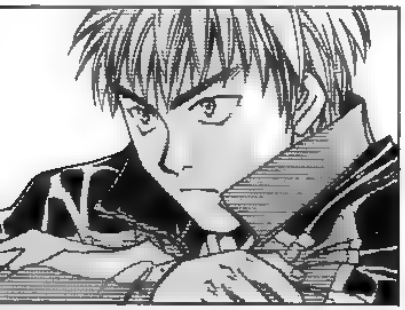

I KIND OF KNOW WHY I'M NOT PERFORMING WELL.
RYOICHI ...
ER...


WHAT?

REMEMBER, WHEN WE FIRST MET, YOU PICKED UP A TALISMAN.
SHŌ, I'VE BEEN WANTING TO THANK YOU...
...FOR SOME TIME NOW.

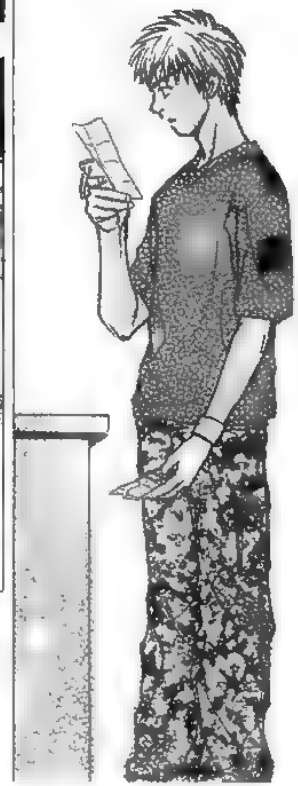
...UNTIL I MET HER.

I THOUGHT SHE HAD DESERTED ME...

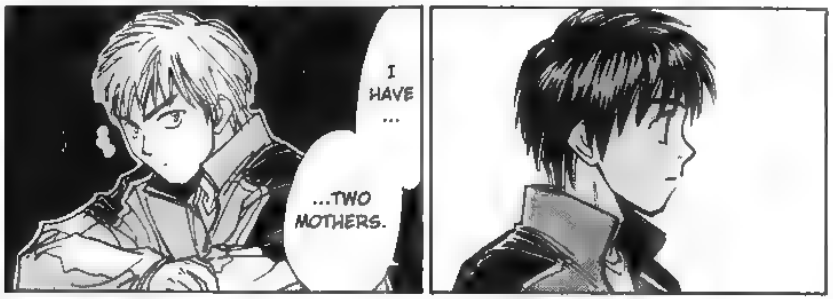


JUST JOKING
NO ONE TOLD ME, BUT I KIND OF KNEW.
WHAT?!
I NEVER NOTICED.
RYOICHI, SO YOU'RE ONLY HALF-JAPANESE?
IT MAKES SENSE. YOU'RE FAIR-SKINNED AND HAVE A BIG BUILD.
I PHONED HER. SHE CAME IN FROM GERMANY RIGHT AFTER THAT.
AND YOUR MOTHER?

...KAZUE'S LETTER.



RYOICHI
...


I HAVE
...
...TWO MOTHERS.

IF YOU WANT TO SEE HER...
...BUT YOU DON'T GO SEE HER NOW...
...WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?
adidas

THE ONE WHO GAVE BIRTH TO ME IS GONE.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANT TO SEE HER, THAT CAN NEVER BE.
...
THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT WILL BE TRUE DOWN THE ROAD.
EVEN IF YOU THINK YOU CAN SEE HER ANY
E...

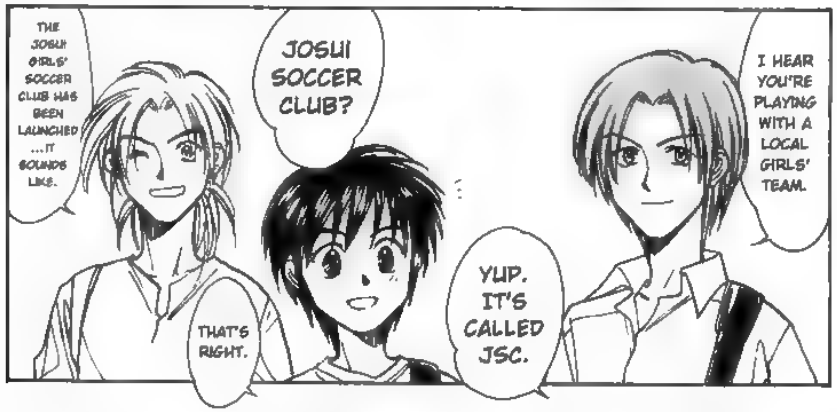
...EVERY DAY.
I WANT TO GO TO GERMANY.
I CAN'T SUPPRESS
...
...THAT WISH.
adidas
adidas

IT'S LIKE RUNNING AWAY BECAUSE THINGS AREN'T WORKING OUT WELL...LIKE ADMITTING MY FAILURE!
BUT
...
I CAN'T QUIT THE SELECT TEAM EITHER.

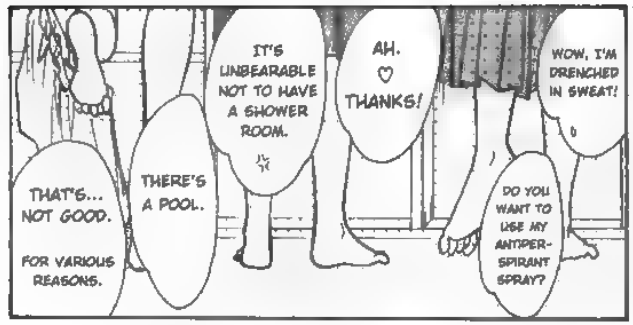
16 FEEL THE DESTINY (The End)

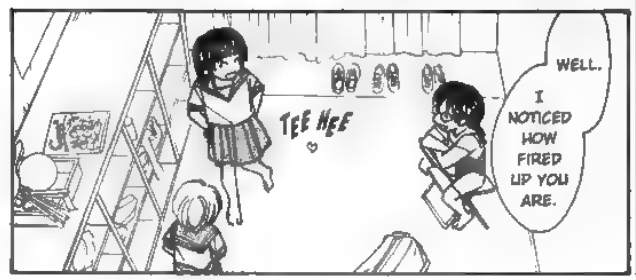
SHŌ ...
BUT ...
I DON'T WANT TO PART WITH YOU THE WAY IT IS.
MY GOAL IS TO CATCH UP TO YOU, RYOICHI, AND PASS YOU.
...I DON'T WANT YOU TO GO.
JUMP
YEAH.
YOU'RE CONTRADICTING YOURSELF

HOW'S IT GOING?
SLIDE
NO PROBLEM AT ALL. WE USE IT ONLY FOR CHITCHAT ANYWAY.
WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOU ALWAYS LETTING US USE THE ROOM.
MODERN DANCE CLUB


THE JOSUI GIRLS' SOCCER CLUB HAS BEEN LAUNCHED ...IT SOUNDS LIKE.
JOSUI SOCCER CLUB?
THAT'S RIGHT.
YUP. IT'S CALLED JSC.
I HEAR YOU'RE PLAYING WITH A LOCAL GIRLS' TEAM.

LOOK HOW EXCITED THEY ARE! IDIOTS!
SHŌ SPOKE TO YOU! I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU.
YOU'RE WORKING HARD.
YES!
THE GIRLS' TEAM HAS EVERYTHING FROM GRADE SCHOOL GIRLS TO HOUSEWIVES.
WE MET THROUGH FUTSAL, AND THEY'RE ALL VERY NICE PEOPLE.
WE'RE ABOUT TO HEAD THERE RIGHT NOW.


THAT'S... NOT GOOD.
FOR VARIOUS REASONS.
THERE'S A POOL.
IT'S UNBEARABLE NOT TO HAVE A SHOWER ROOM.
AH. ♡ THANKS!
WOW, I'M DRENCHED IN SWEAT!
DO YOU WANT TO USE MY ANTIPERSPIRANT SPRAY?



WHISTLE!

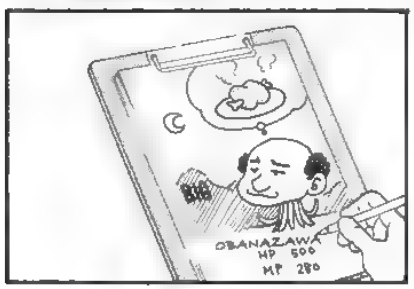
EXTRA STORY

Girls in Earnest

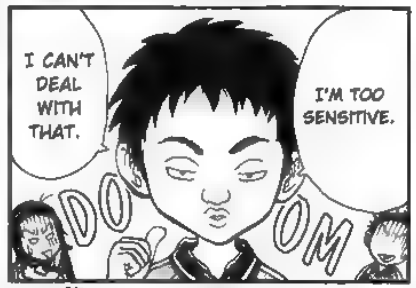
NOW THAT I'M NOT ALONE, I'M STRONG.
BELIEVING THAT SUCH A TOMORROW WILL COME...
AH.
BUT SOMEDAY, JOSUI WILL HAVE AN OFFICIAL SOCCER CLUB FOR GIRLS.
AND IF IT BECOMES A POWERFUL TEAM THAT STANDS ON THE PINNACLE OF JUNIOR HIGH GIRLS' SOCCER IN JAPAN, WOULDN'T THAT BE COOL?
THERE'RE STILL JUST FIVE OF US. IT PROBABLY WON'T HAPPEN WHILE I'M HERE.
WELCOME.
HERE YOU ARE!
WE CAN DO IT!
...LET'S GO FOR IT!
IT IS, HOWEVER, UNCLEAR WHETHER A CERTAIN SOCCER MANGA ARTIST CAUSED MORE GIRLS TO LOVE SOCCER.
MAYBE I SHOULD JOIN THE SOCCER CLUB, TOO.
AFTER THAT, ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE APPLICANTS FOR THE CLUB INCREASED DRAMATICALLY, AND JUST A YEAR AFTER YUKI GRADUATED, THE JOSUI GIRLS' SOCCER CLUB FORMED A TEAM.

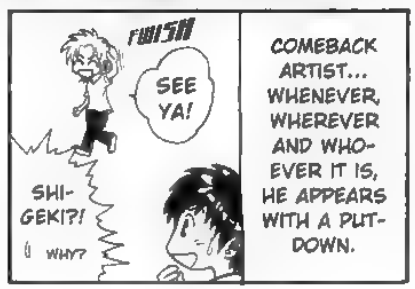
IF YOU RESENT HER FOR THAT...
HEH HEH
IT SURE IS.
PRETTY AMAZING.
SHE EVEN JOINED THE SOCCER CLUB TO IMPRESS A GUY SHE'S AFTER.
...WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT YOURSELF ?!
THE SOCCER CLUB IS FUN.
YOU'RE SO STRONG, YUKI.
I WAS DEPRESSED AND WEAK IN THE PAST.
BUT ...
DON'T BE BOTHERED BY PEOPLE LIKE THAT! IT'S A WASTE OF TIME TO TALK TO THEM.
YES.
YUKI!
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?! SUPER ANNOYING!

Akira Note Confidential!

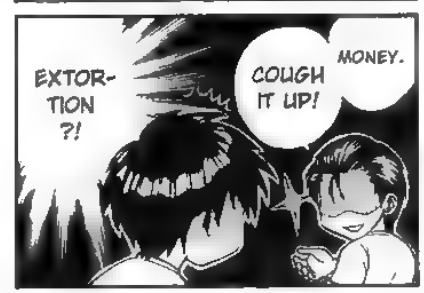


Comeback Artist ☆ Shigeki





Little Iron Foot's Invitation

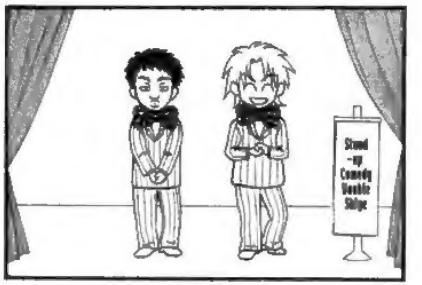


HUSTLE!

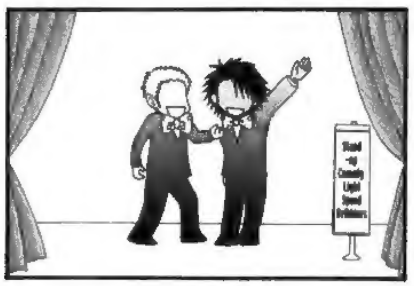
PRODUCED BY:
ASSISTANT F. JAGUAR
& OTHER WONDERFUL ASSISTANTS

I was just trying to encourage him...

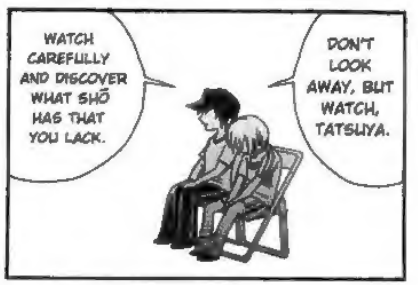
A New Team



The Team Breaks Up



Ahh, Tatsuya Mizuno ~ With ☆ Shige ~



A BIG HOUSE! A BEAUTIFUL MOTHER! A DOG WITH A CERTIFICATE OF PEDIGREE!
LOOKS? BRAINS? POPULARITY?
I'M CONFIDENT ABOUT MY SOCCER TECHNIQUE.
WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO I LACK ...?

AKIRA SAIONJI

PERSONAL DATA	
BIRTHDAY	JUNE 7, 1970
SIZE	5'6" 110 lbs
BLOOD TYPE	AB
FAVORITE FOOD:	TOFU
DISLIKES:	MICE
HOBBY AND SPECIAL SKILLS:	COLLECTING TEDDY BEARS & KENDO

TAKASHI NARUMI

DAISUKE'S NOTES

MASAHIRO SUŌ

PERSONAL DATA	
BIRTHDAY	SEPT. 23, 1975
SIZE	6'0" 163 lbs
BLOOD TYPE	O
FAVORITE FOOD:	YAKISOBA
DISLIKES:	SQUID SHIOKARA & SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS
HOBBY AND SPECIAL SKILLS:	SOCCER

PERSONAL DATA	
BIRTHDAY	AUG. 29, 1984
SIZE	5'11" 147 lbs
BLOOD TYPE	O
FAVORITE FOOD:	SHRIMP IN CHILI SAUCE
DISLIKES:	MILK
HOBBY AND SPECIAL SKILLS:	FORTUNE TELLING & PICK-UP LINES

Next in Whistle!

BE ALIVE

As the weeks pass and the Tokyo Select Team gains more experience, the strengths and weaknesses of each player begin to surface, causing a shift in the team's pecking order. The players must learn how to deal with their issues before they travel to Korea to face their greatest opponent yet—the Seoul Select Team!

Available September 2007!

KaikaNeko Manga

When two of the best get together...